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UNDER THREE TSARS

"YOUR BROTHER IN TRIBULATION."

From the Painting by YAROSHENKO in the Tretiakoff Gallery, Moscow.

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UNDER THREE TSARS

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE IN RUSSIA 1856–1909

BY

ROBERT SLOAN LATIMER

AUTHOR OF
"DR. BAEDEKER AND HIS APOSTOLIC WORK IN RUSSIA"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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" To lead back the lost sheep to the fold, cannot be done by force ;
" this being quite contrary to the doctrine of the Saviour Who came to
" seek and to save the lost. True faith is a work of Grace ; and can
" only be effected in the soul by instruction, gentleness, and most of all
" by good example.

" The Church must neither use nor permit violence against the
" erring ones, even should it not approve of their separation. It is
" utterly opposed to the spirit of its Divine Head."

TSAR ALEXANDER I.
(See page 46)

PREFACE

THE generous reception accorded to my former work, the biography of that extraordinary man of God, Dr. Baedeker, has encouraged me to lift the veil still further from the heroic efforts of modern Evangelicalism in Russia.

The aim of this present work is to present an account of the advance made in that Empire since the Crimean War, towards the ideal of personal liberty in matters of religion.

Some of the stories of suffering for Christ's sake cannot be perused without keen distress; but several considerations demand that they shall be placed on record.

Of the work of God in Finland, I have given no account. Finland is not strictly within the Tsar's Empire, although it is under Russian government to some extent. The Tsar is not "Tsar" in Finland; he is "Grand Duke." The State Church in Finland is the Lutheran Church. The country is altogether more open than is Russia, to enlightened influences and Evangelistic efforts. The story of the Evangelical dissent of Finland, is distinct too from that of Russia; and I have thought it wiser, in view of the pressure of Russian matter, not to attempt to include it in this volume.

Once more I am glad to express my indebtedness to

Mrs. Baedeker for the privilege of using information and incidents gleaned from the travels and labours of her late husband. I wish also to thank Mr. W. S. Oncken of Lincoln, whose father, the late J. G. Oncken of Hamburg, rendered illustrious and imperishable service to the cause of Evangelical truth in Russia in earlier years; Mr. Charles Waters of the *Sunday School Union*; Mr. E. A. Cazalet, president of the *Anglo-Russian Literary Society*; Messrs. Sparkes and Bennet, editors of *Echoes of Service*; Pastor N. F. Höijer, of the *Swedish Evangelical Mission* in Russia; Mr. Z. F. Zacharoff, president of the Molokani Conference, whose acquaintance I was privileged to make when in Russia; my valued friends, Mr. Ivan S. Prokhanoff, editor of the Russian *Christian*, Madame Yasnowsky, widow of the gifted Moscow artist, R. S. Broadbent, Esq., of St. Petersburg; and other friends, Russian and British, for valuable help rendered in the preparation of this work.

R. S. LATIMER.

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CONTENTS

Part I

GATHERING UP THE CLUES

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Russian Ideals	3
II.	The Greek Orthodox Church	12
III.	The Religion of the Russian People	19
IV.	The Story of the "Old Believers"	28
V.	The Story of the Molokans	34
VI.	Absolutism and Religious Liberty	43

Part II

TSAR ALEXANDER II. (1856–1881)

VII.	Bright Hopes	51
VIII.	The Story of the Stundists in the South	58
IX.	The Radstock Awakening in the North	71
X.	Smuggling the Gospel into Russian Poland	77
XI.	Invasion of the Baltic Provinces by Evangelists	85
XII.	The Baptists in Russia	94
XIII.	Anti-Religious Ferments among the Masses	110
XIV.	"The Red Spectre"	119

Part III

TSAR ALEXANDER III. (1881–1894)

CHAP.		PAGE
XV.	And the Tsar said, "Let there be Darkness!"	127
XVI.	Enter Pobiedonostzeff	133
XVII.	"As Sheep in the Midst of Wolves"	141
XVIII.	With the Exiles	152
XIX.	The Ways into the Fold	166
XX.	What did They Believe?	177

Part IV

TSAR NICHOLAS II. (1894–1909)

XXI.	"The Heaven is High, and the Tsar is far away"	187
XXII.	The Dukhobors and Count Leo Tolstoy	192
XXIII.	How Liberty came at Last	204
XXIV.	The Present Evangelical Advance	216
XXV.	Evangelical Agencies at Work	219
XXVI.	"The Morning Cometh"	228

Appendices

A.	The Russian Priesthood	231
B.	The Story of the Parish Pope Tsvetkoff	233
C.	Manifesto of the Greek Orthodox Church	236
	Index	237

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

"YOUR BROTHER IN TRIBULATION" . . *Frontispiece*
From the Painting by Yaroshenko.

RUSSIAN IKONS, OR HOLY PICTURES . . *Facing p.* 14

HOLY MOSCOW . . . . . „ 28
From the Painting by Yasnowsky.

MR. Z. F. ZACHAROFF, President of the Molokan Conference, and Member of the (third) Duma „ 42

TSAR ALEXANDER II. . . . . „ 50

A STUNDIST MEETING . . . . „ 62
From the Painting by N. Bogdanoff-Belsky.

A RUSSIAN VILLAGE, AND A FOREST HOME . „ 88
From Paintings by Yasnowsky.

TSAR ALEXANDER III. . . . . „ 126

K. P. POBIEDONOSTZEFF, AND THE HOLY SYNOD, ST. PETERSBURG . . . . „ 136

TROUBLE . . . . . „ 144
From the Painting by N. B. Orloff.

RUSSIA'S DELIGHT. THE TSAREVITCH . . „ 162

Tsar Nicholas II. . . . *Facing p.* 186

Count Leo Tolstoy . . . . „ 192

Cossacks Clearing a Street . . . . „ 208

The ex-Premier, M. de Witte . . „ 214

The Premier, M. Stolypin . . . „ 220

Map of Russia, showing Places mentioned in this Work.

PART I

GATHERING UP THE CLUES

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

REVELATION xvii. 14.

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

1 JOHN v. 4.

CHAPTER I

Russian Ideals

GOD gave the Gospel-dawn to Russia in the days of that astute and masterful heathen, Vladimir the Great, son of Sviatoslag. For although the events that then took place can scarcely be said to rank as a spiritual awakening, yet they were undoubtedly a providential opening of the country to the Gospel.

The chroniclers tell us with considerable vivacity the story of the "conversion" of the Russian people to the Christian faith. The nine hundredth anniversary of the event was celebrated with ecclesiastical pomp and civic rejoicings in the ancient city of Kieff, the cradle of Russian Christianity, in July 1886.

"Glory to Vladimir, the Prince of Kieff," was the most popular motto in the decorations of the city.

"Be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ!" exclaimed this semi-savage apostle, on the occasion of the famous neo-pentecost. Obediently, down the steep hills of Kieff, the people streamed, peasant and noble, housewife and warrior, youth and patriarch, in one great miscellaneous throng, in the direction of the river Dnieper, to leave behind in the broad flood of its waters, at the command of their imperious monarch, so much of their sins

and their heathenism as was soluble and separable by the observance of this initiatory Christian rite.

"Calling brambles vines will not make them grow grapes," Spurgeon has said. It is not to be wondered at that something of heathenism has survived in the "Christianity" of Russia.

From that day to this, the word of the Tsar has been the rule of the Greek Orthodox Church of Russia. There was no such thing as freedom of conscience, except for one man, on the banks of the Dnieper on that memorable day in 986 A.D. when Vladimir, "filled with transports of joy," as Nestor tells us, dismissed his eight hundred concubines, dragged down the great idol Peroun, the god of thunder, and led the way to the river. It has remained practically the same ever since, until recently—no freedom of conscience in the realm, but for one man. And, unhappily for his subjects, the history of successive Tsars appears to support the contention that this one man, with a few noble exceptions, had no conscience at all!

The realm has fallen, we trust, upon better days under the present Tsar.

Russia is in some respects an unknown land. And it will continue to be a perplexity until the principles underlying her policy, and the ideals that inspire the practical working of her national institutions are understood.

Holy Russia is in theory quite as much a Church as a State. The empire is a territorial and racial *ecclesia*. The place occupied in the Roman Church by the Pope is not in the Greek Orthodox Church occupied by any human being. It is thought, and has been said by outsiders, that the Tsar occupies it. He distinctly disclaims this. It

is true that Peter the Great deposed the patriarchate in Moscow, in order—so history says—that the ecclesiastical power might not rival the temporal. But he did not put himself in the vacant chair. He appointed the "Most Holy Governing Synod" to control the affairs of the Church, with an "ober-procurator" as active director of its proceedings.

The occupant of the position of ober-procurator is never a cleric; the idea of the appointment of a layman to this supreme position in the Russian Church being apparently to leave the spiritual headship vacant. All true Russians are, by birthright, members of the Orthodox Church. Unfaithfulness to this ideal is treachery to one's native land. To abandon the Church is to surrender one of the highest privileges of citizenship. The pervert is unworthy of his nationality. The familiar word passing from man to man is neither "fellow-citizen" as with the Americans, nor "neighbour" as with the British, but "brat" (brother), "bratze" (brothers), in allusion to the Divine family bond in which the Russian people are bound together by a common faith.

When Peter the Great sought to inspire his troops on the eve of the decisive battle of Poltava, he said to them—

"You must not think it is for Peter you fight. No! it "is for your country; it is for our Orthodox faith, for the "Church of God."[1]

"For God and the Tsar" is still their patriot battle-cry, as it was in former ages when stubbornly resisting the western Poles; or the hordes of Mohammedan fanatics

[1] *Russia and England*, by "O. K.," p. 235.

who threatened the very existence of the Christian faith in Europe upon the elastic frontier-line of Muscovy.

Madame Novikoff eloquently contended for the reasonableness of this position some years ago, when defending Russia's Balkan policy—

"Like the English Imperialists who cling to all the "English-speaking races, we feel even more strongly drawn "towards all who utter their religious sentiments in the "language of their Orthodox rites. The Greek Orthodox "world, that is our fatherland; and all Greek Orthodox "are our brethren. The Greek Orthodox Churches of "Bulgaria, of Greece, of Macedonia, Servia, Montenegro, "etc., may be united by ties hardly perceptible; but you "cannot help seeing and feeling them in times of united "dangers and trials."[1]

"Holy Russia!" exclaimed a more recent Russian writer:—"The sacred reality of the Faith is implanted in the very "life of the people, as innate in them as the birch and fir "trees are native to the soil. . . . Holy Russia! Do you "know, it seems to me there are two Russias—a holy one "and an unholy one. The holy one inseparable from God

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, Dec. 1895, p. 1003. To the above may be added the following, from the pen of the same lady—

"Greek Orthodoxy is the soul of our Government, and the great link "between the Government and the people. . . . Russia is more of a "Church than a State; more of a religion than a nationality. In fact "our religion *is* our nationality. We are first Greek Orthodox, and "then Slavs or Russians."—*The M.P. for Russia*, by W. T. Stead, vol. i. p. 137.

To the same effect, Madame Novikoff's brother, General Kiréeff—

"Our country being originally united with her Church—hence the "name of 'Holy Russia'—everything attacking the Church attacks the "very essence of that country."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 250.

" and His nature, and created by the initial holiness of the " people; the unholy one coming from anywhere or no- " where, and creeping in as an intruder."[1]

We are not now concerned with the effect of this ideal upon the Russian foreign policy, but rather with its effect upon her domestic policy. In this ideal we discover the explanation of much that appears to us perplexing and even inhuman. Here is the inspiration of the policy that has been followed with more or less energy for centuries past; with such desperate persistency in recent years; and of which we shall see much in this volume, of obliterating racial and religious distinctions and differences within the boundaries of the Tsar's authority. Poland, the Baltic Provinces, the Caucasus, the unhappy Jews, the Armenians, and even progressive and enlightened Finland with its cultured and genial inhabitants, have all tasted its bitterness.

In the Russian ideal the unification of the empire involves the unification of the religions of the Tsar's subjects. At all costs, by all possible means, this ideal must be striven for. If in the effort for its attainment, here and there, an individual suffers, what is the individual in such a case? The State (the Church) is everything! Even "Nature red in tooth and claw" can furnish countless precedents—

> "So careful of the type, she seems
> So careless of the single life."[2]

To the statesmen whose duty it was to regard this ideal as authoritative and Divine, and all weapons and methods

[1] M. Minshikoff in *Daily Chronicle*, 11th Sept. 1908. See also Wirt Gerrare in *Greater Russia*, p. 286.

[2] *In Memoriam.*

for its attainment as lawful, all things were possible, even as the world has shudderingly discovered.

Similar ideals and the same logical policy have played their fearful part in every nation in Europe, leaving behind on the pages of history the traces of countless bitter tears, the stains and splashes of human blood, and at the same time the record of utter failure.

And yet the ideal appears to bear some superficial resemblance to that of the Apostle Paul. "Till we all come *in the unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto *a perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is *one body* and one Spirit . . . one Lord, *one Faith*, one Baptism, one God and Father of all. . . ."[1]

But the Apostle's method of attaining that unity was not that of our modern ober-procurator. Here it is, "Speaking the truth in love let us grow up into Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ." Let the Holy Synod wisely adhere to this truly orthodox and apostolic method, and it will meet with vastly greater success.

Not only the *unity*, but also the *community* of Russian citizenship, militated against him who diverged from the Orthodox religion.

Next to the family, with its interesting patriarchal government, the village *mir* is the local unit of the Russian State. It has occupied up to the present an important place in the ideal of this great people. The Russians are essentially communistic. Co-operation is hereditary among them, particularly in the vast agricultural districts; and Russia is

[1] Eph. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 13.

an agricultural State. But even in the manufacturing centres, the mill-hands—until quite recently—lived on the premises, the single men together, the single women together, in huge barrack-like dormitories, and the families in their separate quarters, and all sharing a common life. The *artal* or industrial co-operative society is a further example of the practical communism of the people.

The village *mir* is the Russian parish council. It has hitherto had a wide scope and responsible authority. It was not the individual who was responsible to the Treasury for the Imperial Taxes, but the *mir*. The *mir* must collect them as best it could, usually with the aid of the police, and by the process of flogging the impecunious peasants. The *mir* apportioned among the inhabitants the common lands and forests of the parish.

The *mir* was also the court to which disputes among the moujiks were referred for legal settlement. Until recent years it had absolute rights of local option in respect of the liquor traffic; and such money as it derived from any licence it might grant (on its own terms) might be spent just as it pleased. A story is told of an astute publican who secured the right to open a vodka-shop in a certain village, by bribing heavily each member of the *mir*; and he succeeded, within a few days of opening his shop, in getting back from his besotted customers the sum he had expended.[1]

The *mir* has, in a considerable number of cases in South Russia, been converted to God in a body—the starosta (or elder) and all its members. They have combined in prayer and reading the Bible in their meetings.

[1] *Ride to Khiva*, by Colonel F. Burnaby, p. 24.

These were happy days for the little village community, until the heavy hand of the authorities came down upon them in prohibitions, fines, and exile.

Alas, in other instances the *mir* has been the cruel enemy of the nonconforming members of the community, who have suffered well-nigh incredible cruelties at the hands of its members. The following extracts from letters of Stundist brethren illustrate how completely the believing peasant was at the mercy of his neighbours :—

" We were compelled . . . to do all kinds of hard labour ; " and were not permitted to go home at nights. Our wives " and children were left alone. The leading men of the " village and police officials, collected drunken peasants, " and with them they went into our houses and abused " our poor wives. All windows were broken and our books " taken away by the police."

" Late at night," writes another Stundist, " when we were " all asleep, a rabble of peasants . . . broke into our houses, " frightened the children and abused our wives very nearly " unto death. On 30th September (1894), in the night, " several of them in my absence came to my wife, tore ' off her clothes, threw her down on the floor, and sub- " jected her to awful wrong. The starosta did the same. " She was then commanded to make the sign of the cross ; " and as she refused, she was forced to comply. Her arms " were twisted till the blood spurted out. Her flesh was " torn. At the very moment I am writing, she is lying near " to death. The governor of Kieff had cognisance of these " indescribable brutalities ; but even four months later " nothing had been done to discover the names of the " evil-doers. Since then, it is said, some semblance of

" an investigation has taken place, with the result, of course, " that the facts have been denied. Where can witnesses " be found who would have the courage to speak the truth " before such authorities?"

To these village *mirs* was given the right, by Imperial ukaze, to sentence even to lifelong banishment in Siberia any member of their community whom they considered dangerous "to religion," *i.e.* to the Orthodox Church. This law the popes frequently made use of, inducing the *mir* to break up the homes of the Stundists and send them into exile.

"The victims of such barbarous and arbitrary proceedings," says Leo Deutsch, "who were among our party, had many sad stories to tell."[1]

Mr. George Kennan has told us that in the year of his Siberian visit (1885), out of ten thousand men and women exiles, three thousand seven hundred had been sent thither by the *mirs*.[2]

When the moujik listened to the Gospel and received it into his heart and life, even the constitution of Russian communal life contributed to make his experiences intolerable. When you add to this the essential State principle that no Orthodox may violate the Russian ideal by changing his faith, you have before you the two-fold explanation of the tragedy of the struggle for freedom of conscience in that empire.

[1] *Sixteen Years in Siberia*, by Leo Deutsch, p. 176.
[2] *Siberia and the Exile System*, by George Kennan, pp. 79 and 80.

CHAPTER II

The Greek Orthodox Church

UPWARDS of one hundred million souls in the dominions of the Tsar, own allegiance to the Greek Orthodox Church. More than six hundred thousand ecclesiastics daily perform her ceremonials.[1] Her vast treasure-stores of gold and of silver, of jewels and of art, scattered throughout the innumerable cathedrals, churches, and monasteries of the empire, are of fabulous value.

Nobody can visit Russia without being impressed by her religiousness. She everywhere gives ocular demonstration of this ascendancy in magnificent edifices crowned with graceful pinnacles and gilded domes, which, within, are lavishly furnished with paintings, many of them of great value; columns of exquisitely fashioned marbles and alabaster and malachite; altars overlaid with beautiful altar-cloths; and vestments elaborated with the choicest art needlework, and dazzling with their incrustations of gold and silver and precious stones. The wealth, if not the worth, of Christianity is nowhere displayed with greater prodigality than in the great churches of St. Petersburg and Moscow and Kieff.

She is gorgeous too in her processions and ceremonials,

[1] *Free Russia*, by W. Hepworth Dixon, vol. ii. p. 215.

making even the elaboration of Rome appear plain by comparison. One of the most prominent features of a Russian church is the number of *ikons* or pictures of the saints displayed, frequently encased in precious metals and ornamented with jewels. These *ikons* are a feature of all Russian interiors. They are not confined to churches; there is one or more in your room at the hotel; they are to be seen in the cottage of every moujik, and in the marble palace of every prince. They are displayed in shrines, and upon the walls in the public streets, and reverently worshipped by the passers-by, who often kneel, and even prostrate themselves in front of them, regardless of the weather.

"The sacred picture is the consecrating element," says Dean Stanley. "In domestic life it plays the part of the "family Bible, of the wedding gift, of the birthday present. "In the national life it is the watchword, the flag which "has supported the courage of generals, and roused the "patriotism of troops."[1]

Miss Eager has given us some pleasant peeps into the home-life of the Tsarina, the daughter of our beloved Princess Alice, and one of the most interesting personalities in Russia to British readers. The room of the Empress in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg is furnished in pink and green. One corner is hung with scarlet cloth from ceiling to floor. On this are displayed the holy pictures; and here hangs the sacred lamp which is always kept burning before the *ikon*. Several of these pictures are illuminated in gold and decorated with precious stones. Some have only the face painted, and the garments are of gold and

[1] *The History of the Eastern Church*, by A. P. Stanley, p. 304.

jewels. They are beautiful specimens of the goldsmith's work, but are "hardly artistic."[1]

The Greek Orthodox Church reprobates the statue and carvings in relief. Her teachers insist literally upon the observance of the first part of the second commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." But the remainder of the commandment, that forbids bowing down to "likenesses," is apparently not considered to be of any importance. You will rarely, if ever, see a statue or graven image in their churches.[2]

George Turberville, in his rhymed account of his visit to Russia in the time of Queen Elizabeth, said—

> "The house that hath no god, or painted saint within,
> Is not to be resorted to; that roof is full of sin."[3]

They who deprecate the use of *ikons* are dealt with unsparingly. In the service of "Orthodox Sunday," among the imprecations, is the following:—

"To those who cast reproach on the holy images, which "the Holy Church receiveth in remembrance of the works "of God and His saints, to inspire the beholders with piety, "and to incite them to imitate their examples, and to those "who say that they are idols—Anathema!"[4]

It is interesting to place side by side with this, the state-

[1] *Six Years in the Russian Court*, by M. Eager, p. 10.

[2] There is a representation of our Lord, life size, seated in a chair near the altar, in the Church of St. Philip, in the island of Solovetski in the White Sea. Rev. A. A. Boddy in *With Russian Pilgrims* (p. 143) describes it; and adds, "It is contrary to the rules and canons of the Eastern Church, which only allows pictures."

[3] *Studies in Russia*, by A. J. C. Hare, p. 14.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 327.

RUSSIAN IKONS, OR HOLY PICTURES.

Of the Ikon of our LORD, the face and hands only are painted: the remainder of the surface is metal, beautifully chased. Such Ikons are frequently of silver or gold, and occasionally encrusted with jewels. The other three pictures are specimens of ordinary glazed earthenware ikons with metal backs, the figures of the Saints being painted in bright colours.

ment made by Nicanor, Bishop of Kherson, in a report respecting his own diocese :—

"For every one man in my diocese who has a partial "knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity, there are more "than one hundred in absolute darkness, to whom every "*ikon* is a god."

That there is more in the veneration of *ikons* than simple incitement "to imitate the examples" of the saints of which they are presentments, can hardly be denied.

"The Japanese prepared for the campaign," said a scoffing Russian writer respecting the late war, "by "despatching troops; and we answered by opening our "folding *ikons*, and raising aloft our religious banners and "crosses. . . . At last, with a waggon-load of holy images our "Commander-in-chief set out hopefully. . . . The religious "among the masses explain our reverses by saying that on "the journey to the Far East two different consignments "of holy images got mixed; and those which were to have "helped the Admiral on sea, were exchanged for the *ikons* "meant for the General of the land troops."[1]

Very justly has it been said by another critic that if those responsible for the efficiency of the Russian army had trusted less in *ikons*, and more in simple honesty of administration, the campaign would probably have had a widely different result. Every scrupulous attention was paid to the holy pictures; but the unhappy soldiers were shamelessly robbed, even of their boots, and the sick and dying of their blankets and food, by heartless scoundrels in high office.[2]

[1] *National Review*, May 1905, p. 432.
[2] See *Red Russia*, by J. Foster Fraser, pp. 24 and 100.

" It is not surprising that a Christian church introduced " among a barbarous nation . . . would be naturally dis- " posed to all kinds of symbolism and ceremonial practices. " The Russian Church is replete with symbolism from top " to bottom. The very shapes of the churches . . . a " ship . . . a cross . . . a star with rays, are . . . symbolical. " If the church be surmounted with one cupola, that " cupola represents Christ . . .; if there be three . . . " the Trinity; if five, Christ and the Four Evangelists; if " . . . seven, the Seven Sacraments . . .; if nine, the nine " ranks of Heavenly Spirits; if thirteen, Christ and the " Twelve Apostles."[1]

The authority wielded by the Orthodox Church over the masses of the Russian people is enormous. Before its terrors the proudest bow in humility. To its ostentatious ceremonials and processions all render respect and reverence. Who can tell how great a blessing to Russia her Church might yet be, if a mighty spiritual reformer should in this twentieth century arise within her borders!

Of late years there has been a movement within the Church herself to "shake herself from the dust." This is certainly an encouraging sign. This movement demands the right to approach the Emperor independently of the Holy Synod, with a view to securing his sanction to proposals of reform. Such an effort on the part of the clergy was once frustrated by Pobiedonostzeff;[2] but it revealed to the world the awakening of a soul in the Russian priesthood.

The Church has within recent years promoted "missions"

[1] *The Service of the Mass*, by Dr. C. H. H. Wright, p. 19. See also *Russian Art*, by Alfred Maskell, p. 154.

[2] *Contemporary Review*, May 1905, p. 712.

in remote parts of the empire, with the object of refuting and crushing "sectarianism." These are—if fairly conducted —most excellent. They may not indeed be successful in demonstrating to the peasants, and others attending them, the superiority of Orthodoxy in creed and in life. The missions sometimes have the opposite effect, nor is it to be wondered at. It is so absurdly easy to prove the superiority of any creed with life and power in it, to the soulless performance of a moribund ritualism.[1] The utility of the "missions" will be in teaching the Orthodox Church to revise her venerable positions and bring herself into line with the Eternal Word, and with the yearnings of to-day.

Vladimir, the son of Sviatoslag, is long dead. Let him lie. The clamant needs of human souls in the living present demand a virile ministry, capable, spiritual, sympathetic; and a message so Divine that it is self-demonstrating in its effect upon those who hear it. A mission was being held in Tiflis. The church was packed to the doors with a vast throng. An eminent professor from the metropolis had come to pulverise the sectarians with the authority of the Church. Near the pulpit stood a man, in stature a Saul among the people, towering head and shoulders above the crowd. He had been once a Baptist, but had recently gone back to the true fold, and now his voice—a voice of thunder —was frequently lifted up in the service of the Greek Orthodox.

"These sectarians are of yesterday," exclaimed the pro-

[1] See *Russia*, by Sir A. Mackenzie Wallace, vol. i. p. 335; also *The Truth about Russia*, by W. T. Stead, p. 338. Mr. Stead quotes an effective paragraph on this subject from the St. Petersburg daily, the *Novoe Vremya*. "Compare your lives and ours," say the Baptists to the priests.

fessor in the pulpit. "They have no Divine authority. Our priests trace their 'orders' back to the Holy Apostles. The hands of ordination, in unbroken succession from the beginning until now, have been laid upon our heads, and thus authority has been communicated to us. Those whom we bless, are therefore blessed indeed. These sectarians cannot bless anybody. Then wherefore pay heed to them?"

The orator paused to observe the crushing effect of his dramatic inquiry. At that moment the stentorian voice of the renegade Baptist filled the church to its remotest corners.

"Whom the Church blesses is blessed indeed, little father; but are her curses sure, as well as her blessings?"

"Certainly, my son, certainly," replied the preacher. "The succession of the Church from the Holy Apostles gives Divine authority equally to both."

"Whom the Church curses is cursed indeed," cried the son of thunder. "When Roman and Greek separated, they heartily cursed each other, then wherefore pay heed to either of them?"

The priests howled in execration against the interruptor. The crowd abandoned itself to boisterous enjoyment of the overwhelming retort. White and speechless, the professor gazed down upon the living sea that heaved and swayed in a hurricane of excitement beneath him. His discourse had come to an abrupt end, and the service also. There was no opportunity for another word. The church emptied its excited multitude into the streets. Was that "mission" a failure? By no means. The Greek Orthodox professor and the priests learned something.

CHAPTER III

The Religion of the Russian People

"WHEN He saw the multitudes, He was moved with "compassion on them, because they were . . . "as sheep having no shepherd."[1] Oh, the pity of it, that the millions of Russia are for the most part in a like plight to this day!

Russia has been well described as "an Empire of Villages."[2] The peasantry, comprising nearly nine-tenths of the population, is indisputably religious, if credulity and abject terror be religion. St. Paul said to the Athenians, "Ye are too religious."[3] If the Orthodox Church had done her duty, she would long ago have hastened to relieve the people of those shackles of superstition that hold their shuddering souls in lifelong servitude. All the discarded nightmare of the middle ages of Western Europe, and more besides, is included in their everyday working theology, the superstitions varying according to the locality.[4] Witches, wizards, familiar spirits, omens by the hundred, ghosts, spirits, demons of the forest, demons of the stream,

[1] St. Matthew ix. 36.
[2] *Russia and England*, by "O. K." (Olga Novikoff), p. 228.
[3] Acts xvii. 22.
[4] *Through Russia on a Mustang*, by T. Stevens, pp. 289–292.

the utility of magicry, the potency of charms, mystic rites of incantation, the supernatural premonitions of dreams, the secret significance of the flight of birds, of the croaking of frogs, of the crowing of the cock, each item in the whole pitiful list of them, plays its part in bringing terror and wretchedness into their too credulous minds and darkened lives. A threefold sneeze, unless some kind neighbour is at hand to cry "God bless you!" before the third orgasm is complete, is, to vast multitudes of Russians, a certain prelude of disaster. A yawn will invariably necessitate the rapid making of the sign of the cross in front of the gaping mouth, lest the devil should seize the favourable opportunity of slipping down the throat.

Here you have specimens of the real articles of the people's creed. In such things as these, do they most steadfastly believe. There is no law prohibiting *this* dissent. There appears never to have been any State limitation of liberty of conscience in respect of such articles of faith as these. Nobody has ever been sent to Siberia for these beliefs. Nor has the Church protested against their falsehood, or against the contravention of her theology involved in them; nor has she apparently ever made any serious attempt to deliver these poor captives, her own sons and daughters, from a hell in which they are tormented day and night by uncanny powers that yet have no existence! It is said that even the Tsar himself believes in omens, and in unlucky months, and formerly consulted clairvoyants.[1]

[1] It appears that even the arch-champion of Greek Orthodoxy, Pobiedonostzeff, was the slave of spookery. His alarms over the rappings of a disembodied pope who was anxious to have his interrupted mass completed, are set forth in Mr. Stead's *M.P. for Russia*, vol. i. p. 38.

The Russian moujik is lamentably illiterate. Only about three per cent. of the population can read or write.[1] He has never been thoroughly emancipated from the heathenism of his ancestors. Blessed be the messengers of God, Greek Orthodox or "sectarian," who will set about to do this urgent and practical mission work!

If the moujik's creed is gross superstition, what is his practice? What are his habits? How does he live his life? There is no question of his devoutness. We have seen his crossings and his bowings before his holy pictures. Without doubt this humble peasant, in rough sheepskin coat and hard bast boots, with shaggy unkempt hair, and bushy eyebrows and beard, so docile, so patient, so kindly and respectful, so uncomplaining and easily contented, yet withal so tenacious, so massive in his determination and his powers of endurance, so slow to kindle, but so terrible when kindled, has the makings of a great saint in him. The vodka-shop will never help him to evolve sainthood. It often aids him to evolve devilry in considerable quantities, to destroy his own well-being, to dissipate his slender patrimony, to blight his soul. Here, as in England, alcoholic drink has, alas! far too strong a hold on the habits and affections of the people of every degree.[2]

Of spiritual oversight the Russian people have none whatever. To moral training and exhortation they are for the most part utter strangers. We who are familiar with high-principled, consecrated, and faithful Christian pastors find it well-nigh impossible to realise this.

[1] *The Real Siberia*, by J. Foster Fraser, p. 101.

[2] See *The Expansion of Russia*, by F. H. Skrine, pp. 280 and 318.

"Is not the empire a Christian State? Are there not priests at work throughout the community?" you ask.

Priests? Yes. Priests interested in the spiritual welfare of their flocks, or even in their moral improvement? Alas, for the most part, no! The position of a parish pope is frankly and openly that of a salesman of certain spiritual wares of which he has a monopoly in his "parish," and for which he therefore contrives to secure the best cash price possible from his customers. These spiritual wares are masses for the repose of the souls of deceased relatives, the ceremonies of baptizing his neighbours' infants, marrying their brides, and burying their dead. The bargaining and haggling that take place between the pope and the would-be purchaser of these commodities, are such as we associate with the purchase of a cow or a pig at a country fair.

The pope has the parish monopoly. He can obtain his own figure. The moujik counts his kopecks. His purse is so pitifully empty; provender is needed for the thin horse, and the ancient cow. Few and elementary as are his wants, his scanty resources are unequal to supplying them. And then the taxes! Come what may, the taxes must be paid, and paid in full. Or else the flogging at the police station, with the shame and agony of it, and the weary waiting afterwards while the tedious wounds are healing! The scars of last year's flogging are yet tender. No; the taxes must be paid, if the mass for the dead first-born is left unsaid, and the soul of the latest-born is consigned to Gehenna for lack of baptism!

"Hard-hearted pope! Grasping, avaricious, holy Orthodox, have you no pity on a poor moujik? Must you eat

up even my children's flesh? Can you not abate your price by a few kopecks, that I may pay you without selling my horse, or the summer's toil of my hands?"

On the other hand, the pope has also a numerous family. The times are hard for him too. His boys have big appetites, and firewood must be bought, for the long dark winter. Masses and baptisms are his livelihood.

With many loud and angry recriminations, the terms are at length settled, and the mass or baptism performed; but, spiritual profit? How is spiritual profit possible? In rural Russia this is the normal state of affairs.[1]

The white clergy, the parish popes, are a class apart. The office is practically hereditary, passing from father to son, or to son-in-law. These brown-coated, flat-hatted popes are usually men of little or no education, no ambition, and no influence. Individuality is crushed out by the holy Orthodox organisation of which they are the humble representatives. It is not requisite that they should even live decent moral lives. Nobody is surprised when they do not. Their habits of intoxication are a familiar jest of the countryside.[2] But the people crowd their churches on saints' days all the same.

There are doubtless many excellent men among the Russian popes who do their utmost, according to their light, in a difficult position. Some of them even fear God. But, alas for the people, there are not a few who neither fear God nor regard man.[3]

The village pope in his long robe, with girdle about the

[1] *The Russian Peasantry*, by Stepniak, p. 376. *With Russian Pilgrims*, by Rev. A. A. Boddy, p. 210.

[2] See Appendix A (1).

[3] See Appendix A (2).

waist, and long hair parted in the middle and falling upon his shoulders, imagines that he resembles in his garb and appearance our Lord Jesus Christ. With this fancied external resemblance he is too often quite content.

As a matter of fact, these officials exist as a part of the civil service of the Government. This degrading truth is stated with startling candour, and pressed home with much force, in a petition which was prepared by the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and a meeting of the higher clergy for presentation to the Tsar in 1905.[1]

The simple ignorance and superstition of the people is illustrated by the following incident:—

A young girl of Odessa was a devout worshipper at the shrine of St. Jonah. Her family was not of one mind ecclesiastically; for while her father was a Greek Orthodox, her mother adhered to the tenets of Lutheranism. The parents were shopkeepers, and upon the girl Elizabeth was imposed the—to her—odious burden of serving customers in the shop.

"O father, how I do dislike standing behind the counter!" she complained one day for the hundredth time.

"Well, my dear," replied her parent, "if you can find a situation elsewhere more to your liking, you are at liberty to take it, and I will engage some one else."

"I wish I could find one elsewhere," she said.

"Ask the good St. Jonah, he will help you," said her superstitious father.

Elizabeth reflected upon this suggestion, and in a day or two she wended her way to the Greek Orthodox Church with two large candles to burn at the shrine of St. Jonah,

[1] See Appendix A (3).

that her prayer to the saint might be the more acceptable. They had cost her twenty kopecks; but that was a mere trifle to the prospect of being set free from the slavery of the shop by the kindly offices of the saint. For two months day after day the lassie spent her twenty kopecks on the candles, and tripping lightly with them to the church admiringly watched them burning steadily before the holy *ikon*. Like other *ikons*, the face and the hands were painted, and the rest of the figure was of gilt metal lavishly studded with jewels that flashed brilliantly as the rays of light from the dedicated candles fell upon them.

At the end of the two months, as no news had been heard of another situation, Elizabeth's patience, if not her faith, began to wane. She began to get irritated with St. Jonah for his unseemly and contemptuous inattention and delay.

"See how much money I have spent on candles for his "shrine, twenty kopecks a day, nearly a rouble and a half a "week out of my little earnings. Of course, I was able to "take a little from the till now and again unperceived, but "it was rather risky, and I mustn't do it too often. A "rouble and a half a week for two long months! It is "quite a fortune I have spent on the saint, and he makes "me no sign. I have given him twelve roubles. He is "too greedy. He must be content with thinner candles. "He has made my purse thin enough, to say nothing of "the till."

True to her word, her next pair of candles for the *ikon* cost just ten kopecks, half the price of the former supply; but they were very slender and quickly burnt out. This went on for a week or two, but St. Jonah was apparently

quite unmoved. To all her prayers the saint turned a deaf ear, and the *ikon* a blind eye to all her candles.

At length her patience ran right out. She went one fine morning to the church, but took no candles, thick or thin. Instead, she walked across the church floor with determined stride, her face flushed, and a wrathful flash in her eye. Marching up to the holy picture, she shook her clenched fist in St. Jonah's face, and muttered her vengeance between clenched teeth.

"You thief! My candles you have *stolen*! It is nothing better, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself. A fine saint you are, to let a poor girl like me waste her hard-earned kopecks—no, not kopecks, but roubles! Roubles, do you hear? Why do you hang there, looking as if you didn't care the least bit? I don't believe you do! You shall have no more candles from me, you robber!"

While the girl was thus abusing the *ikon* with emphatic threatening gestures, two priests who had been observing her movements from a distant corner of the church came hurrying forward.

"What are you doing, girl? Are you shaking your fist " at St. Jonah? You sacrilegious infidel!" cried one.

"We must send her off to the prison," cried the other. "It is infamous!"

Elizabeth burst into a flood of tears; and between her sobs she poured out to the monks the story of her disappointment and of St. Jonah's unkindness. They ultimately let her go; but she secretly wished as she went back to the little shop that she had taken another candle, and blacked St. Jonah's imperturbable and aggravating face with its smoking wick.

If she had done so, she would not have treated the *ikon* so badly as the real Saint Jonah, Metropolitan of Moscow, is said to have treated the lawful possessor of the see, Basil, when he cruelly ordered the jailers to put out his eyes with red-hot irons. There is a legend current in Moscow that when Napoleon, on his never-to-be-forgotten visit to that city, removed the lid of Saint Jonah's coffin, to take an inquisitive and irreverent look at the holy remains, the saint angrily lifted his hand and shook it in the Emperor's face, who started back in horror, and hastened away from the city. Whether Elizabeth remembered this circumstance when she threatened the *ikon* with physical violence for its wanton indifference, we do not know. But if St. Jonah could have raised a hand against Napoleon, he had no excuse for not "lifting a finger" to help the poor lassie!

CHAPTER IV

The Story of the "Old Believers"

NO record of religion in Russia could be written without referring to the famous schism in the Greek Orthodox Church, that took place in the reign of Tsar Alexis the father of Peter the Great, in the year 1654.

In that remarkable Reformation, the processes of the Reformation in Western Europe were reversed. For whereas in England and the western nations the reformers protested against the errors of the main body, the Romanists, and seceded from membership because they were impotent to effect the reforms they desired, in Russia, the reformers remained within the Church, and those who disapproved retired, and, preferring the original methods, were called "the Old Believers," or Raskolniks (from Ras = asunder; and Kolot = to split).

This great schism from the Russian Orthodox Church arose in consequence of the issue of a revised edition of the Mass Book by Nikon the famous reformer, who was then the Metropolitan of Moscow, and the head of the Greek Church in the empire. Nikon was a most saintly and enlightened man for the times in which he lived; possessed with a consuming desire for the purity of the Church, simplicity in worship, fidelity to the Word of God,

HOLY MOSCOW—THE RIVER IN FLOOD.

From the Painting by THEODORE I. YASNOWSKY, of Moscow.
Photo by CHARLES PHILLIPS, F.R.G.S.

and the spirituality of religion. His all-too-brief occupancy of the Moscow patriarchate was prolific in the reform of abuses, greatly to the indignation of his unspiritual and unscrupulous enemies in Church and State. But it was his attempt to revise the Mass Book that produced the Raskolniks. The alterations he made, appear to us to be trivial; and it astonishes us that men could have been found to suffer so much for so little, as the Raskolniks afterwards suffered for their dissent. Their opposition to the revision was on the ground that it was an unwarranted tampering with the ancient manner of worship of the Church. The shape of the cross (Nikon decided in favour of the Greek cross or equal-sided, against the Latin cross which is long, with short transverse beam); the uplifting of two, or of three fingers for the sign of the cross in acts of devotion (Nikon decided in favour of three); the direction of processional marches, eastward or westward (Nikon said the latter); the number of "Hallelujahs," two, or three (Nikon said three); and the spelling of our Lord's name Issus, or Jesus (Nikon preferred the latter); these were the points in dispute. Here is the awful battle-ground of the centuries, upon which a terribly unequal conflict was waged. The matters involved appear to us so inconsequent, that we are staggered by the knowledge that they were the occasion of ferocious displays of cruelty and slaughter under successive emperors and empresses.

The Raskolnik movement would in all probability have completely and speedily died out, if it had been left alone. The over-zealous attempt to extinguish the fire by scattering the coals, resulted in a greatly extended area of conflagra-

tion. "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew."[1]

This attempt to blow out the flames of dissent with the bellows of persecution, was made in earnest by Sophia, the sister of Peter the Great, she being practically ruler of the realm during Tsar Peter's earlier years. Sophia issued orders that the Raskols were to be hunted out and exterminated without mercy. Thus the crusade began. In all parishes those who were found to absent themselves from the sacraments, rather than adore the equal-sided cross, and receive the three-fingered blessing, were imprisoned and examined by torture to implicate, if possible, their neighbours. These were seized, knouted, and in many cases burned alive. Those who managed to elude the authorities fled for dear life, and sought in impenetrable forests, among wild beasts, and the frightful severities of houseless and foodless winters, a refuge from physical agonies and death, such as the habitations of their fellow-creatures could not afford to them.

After them went the Cossacks of Sophia. Some were captured and brought back, to suffer and to die. Many perished in the wilds. Others penetrated yet farther into the swamps and morasses that lie in the heart of the unexplored forests of the north and the east. It is said that, even to this day, there lie hidden, in the remote recesses of these virgin forests, entire villages populated by descendants of these refugees, unknown to the Government. They have never been visited by an official; they pay no taxes; they supply no recruits for the army; they are utterly ignorant of the great empire of which they form a

[1] Exodus i. 12.

part, to say nothing of the twentieth-century world beyond. They worship God in their own way, as their Bible and traditional memories direct, without the assistance of priest or preacher. At Kem, on the shores of the White Sea, there is a settlement of "Old Believers," descendants of these terror-stricken refugees. They are to-day hardy seamen and fishermen.[1]

The story of the voluntary self-immolation of entire churches-full of these desperate dissenters, who, rather than allow themselves to fall into the hands of the Orthodox, set fire to the buildings and perished by hundreds in the flames, thus cheating their implacable foes of the joy of the sight of their final agonies, is told fully in Russian history.

The wide dispersion of the Old Believers, in due time, led to the springing up of different modes of thought and habits of worship among them; so that at the present time they are divided into at least a dozen different sects, details of which it is not necessary to give in this work.[2]

The most widely known, the Dukhobortzi, an offshoot of the Bezpopovtsi or popeless division, will be met with again as the story proceeds.[3]

These people demand our attention because of this one circumstance: they led the way for the advance of the Church of God along the heaven-appointed path of freedom of conscience. They were the first recognised body of dissenters from the Greek Orthodox Church—pioneers

[1] *Russian Pictures*, by T. Michell, p. 65.
[2] See *The Russian Peasantry*, by Stepniak, p. 432.
[3] *The Story of Moscow*, by Wirt Gerrare, p. 203.

along the path of religious liberty in a land where dissent from the State religion is esteemed to be high treason; and they have paid an enormous price for the honour of the premier position.

They were pioneers. We will not fail to do them honour, although they struggled, strange as it seems to us, not *for* reform, but *against* it; and for generations were even more strongly opposed to Evangelical doctrine than were the Greek Orthodox themselves.

This, however, has not been the case of late years among families of Raskol birth; for great numbers of the recent converts to the Evangelical faith among the Stundists have been recruits from the Old Believers. This is perfectly natural. Their traditional training has been in dissent from the State religion. They and their fathers have endured pains, and penalties, and privations, for freedom of conscience in days when even the light was as darkness. They were thus prepared for the glorious dawn of Gospel truth that came to Russia with the wider circulation of the Word of God, and the preaching of wandering Stundists; for they found something in common, something that appealed intensely to their deepest sympathies, in the story of the cruelties inflicted on these fellow-citizens for their religious faith. It is not to be wondered at, that many modern Old Believers have said to the Evangelical believers, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

But even Old Believers need the converting grace of God. Dissent from a State church can no more make a man to be a child of God, than can assent thereto. "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any-

thing, but a new creation." Among the sixteen or seventeen millions of Raskolniks in Russia, there is, therefore, a most promising field for the preaching of the Gospel. Like Apollos in Ephesus, they stand in need of some one to "expound to them the way of God more perfectly."

CHAPTER V

The Story of the Molokans

AS far as the haziness of the history will allow us to trace the record back, we gather that the first seeds of modern Evangelicalism in the Russian empire were carried thither from the shores of Great Britain.

In the reign of young Edward VI., that spirit of adventure and exploration was awakened in British breasts, which was destined to be so fruitful in results in the subsequent reign of our Elizabeth, and which has ever since been a leading characteristic of our race. It was at that period that a little group of "merchant-adventurers," as they called themselves, fitted out three ships "for the discoverie of lands, territories, and seignories unknown."

This enterprising fleet[1] sailed away to the north-east, carrying with them a letter from King Edward addressed to "The Northern and Eastern sovereigns." Edward died before his letter was delivered. One vessel disappeared in the trackless tide; all the crew of the second were frozen to death off the northern coast of Norway; the third disembarked among a fur-clad and terrified population on the shores of the White Sea, at the spot now occupied by the

[1] *With Russian Pilgrims*, by Rev. A. A. Boddy, p. 296. *The First Voyage from England to the White Sea*, Appendix A.

town of Archangel. News was conveyed to the Tsar of the arrival of this extraordinary party, and they were conveyed southward to Moscow. The reigning Tsar was Ivan the Terrible, then in his early manhood.

"Arrived at Moscow," says Baron de Bogoushevsky,[1] "the English strangers were dazzled by the unexpected "splendour of the Russian court. Surrounded by the "Boyars and dignitaries of his realm, clad in rich vestments "of gold and silver brocade, the young sovereign, wearing "a magnificent diadem sparkling with precious gems, was "seated on a costly throne. At the audience, Chancellor "delivered to him King Edward's letter. . . .

"After the audience, Chancellor and his companions "were entertained at the Tsar's table along with one "hundred of the élite of the court. They were served by "attendants in magnificent costumes, and ate from vessels "of silver and gold."

Promptly, Ivan sent an ambassador to England. Of his return to Russia, the Baron writes—

"The little squadron anchored in Port St. Nicholas "(Archangel). The Russian ambassador proceeded to "Moscow taking with him specimens of English goods "and a number of English craftsmen. . . . Skilful "surgeons also accompanied the ambassador, and settled "in the capital."[2]

Fresh from the Evangelical revival in Great Britain, known as Puritanism, these "English craftsmen and skilful surgeons" carried their fervent religion to the heart of Greek Orthodoxy. They were probably all the more

[1] *Royal Historical Society's Transactions*, vol. vii. p. 60.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 69.

welcome because they were like the Russians themselves, in hostility to Rome. One of the doctors taught his Russian man-servant, Matthew Semenof, to read the Slavonic Bible; although the reading of the Bible was then a crime in Russia. This man communicated the burning secrets of Evangelical truth to the wistful ears of others in Moscow and the neighbourhood. This coming at length to the knowledge of the Tsar, Semenof was arrested, put to the torture to discover the names of others, and was ultimately broken on "the wheel" in the palace dungeons. It is said that Ivan used to spend his afternoons occasionally in these underground regions, witnessing the sufferings of his unhappy subjects, who were tortured at his order. When he returned to his apartments in the palace, his face was flushed with excitement and "radiant with satisfaction," and his manner was most gay and jocular.[1]

Although Semenof was silenced, the Word of God was not bound, and the poor serfs who had received the truth at his lips communicated the priceless treasure stealthily to their fellows. The usual results followed: discovery, the awful knout, and transportation to Siberia, or else death.

Another Moscow doctor named Tveritinof, in the time of Peter the Great, over a hundred years later, gave a further impetus to nonconformist thought. His plan was to copy out with his own hand those portions of Scripture in which the practices of the Orthodox Church were condemned, such as texts forbidding image- and saint-worship,

[1] From *Karamsin*, vol. ix. p. 303. See *Studies in Russia*, by A. J. C. Hare, p. 315, and Stanley's *History of the Eastern Church*, p. 325.

and to distribute them among those with whom he thought they would be effective. In this way he was the means of turning many to the Lord Jesus. He also ultimately fell into the clutches of the authorities.

Coming down another hundred years, and omitting many details of interest, we may select another personality, as an example of the greatly varied methods in which the good seed of the Kingdom was scattered throughout the broad empire. In the years 1750 to 1790, a Russian of some education named Gregory Skovoroda carried on the glorious work of an itinerating Evangelist. He was a precursor of the modern American method, that unites sermon and song. In the rags of a religious pilgrim, and armed with a copy of the Scriptures in the original tongues, and a flute, he went on foot from place to place through the vast forests of the North and across the boundless steppes of the South, playing his instrument, and talking in homely fashion to the people about their souls and the Saviour. He taught the peasantry the words and tunes of simple hymns of his own composition, some of which are still sung in the Molokan meetings. He has doubtless many stars in his crown.

While Gregory Skovoroda was tramping the country for Christ, an event of great moment was happening in the Southern Provinces; that was the secession of the son-in-law of the leader of the Dukhobors from that body. The Dukhobor leader was by trade a dealer in wool; but his head being turned by the veneration shown to him by his followers, he claimed thereupon to be none other than the Lord Jesus reincarnated. This demented utterance led to a falling away among those who gave him allegiance; and among

others of his son-in-law, Uklein, a tailor.[1] Uklein loved the Word of God—which the Dukhobors were beginning now to neglect—and was a preacher of much power and consecration.

He removed to the province of Tambov among whom he found certain Molokans. Preaching the Gospel there, many of the peasants became converted, and, as usual, the authorities interfered. He was arrested, beaten with the knout, and thrust into the Tambov prison. On being released, like Bunyan, he recommenced preaching; for the fire Divine was in his soul. He was again seized by the police, fiercely knouted, and was lost to sight in the wilds of Siberia, whither he was banished, and where we may be sure he spent his last years in the Master's glorious service.

> "Thus would I tell to sinners round
> What a dear Saviour I have found;
> I'd point to His redeeming blood,
> And cry, 'Behold the way to God!'"

The name Molokan means "milk-eater." It was given to these people in derision as a nickname because they would eat their curds and their cheese on fast days as on other days; and because, while the Russian peasants generally were over-fond of vodka, they contented themselves with milk. But they cheerfully accepted the term, and said—

"Yes, we are indeed milk-eaters. We desire 'the sincere (unadulterated) milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby.'[2] We must have it unadulterated—uncontaminated by the fingers of popes, and undiluted by any mixture

[1] See *Russia*, by Wallace, vol. i. p. 326.
[2] 1 Peter ii. 2.

of man's devices; and we will have as much as we can get of it, for we love our Bibles!"

An interesting description of the Molokans is given by one who had personal acquaintance with them in 1874. Says this writer—

"There may be some two millions of the Molokans at "the present day in Russia. They live in the provinces of "Kaluga, Samara, Saratov, Astrakhan, Tauria, and the "Caucasus. To the last-named two provinces, as well as "to Siberia, they were banished in the reign of the Emperor "Nicholas.

"This sect is not only free from all adoration of images, "but rejects all visible means of grace, so that even baptism "and the Lord's Supper are only used spiritually by them. "They also abstain from pork. They have a more inti- "mate acquaintance with the Word of God than may be "found in almost any Protestant church. Every one of "them knows many of the most beautiful psalms, and "the most important chapters from the New Testament "and prophets, by heart. Their service principally con- "sists in reading the Word of God with a few explanations.

"Their hymn book, too, is the Bible. To a monotonous "tune they sing for hours a chapter, then pray a chapter "kneeling, then again sing a chapter. Thus they usually "sing nine chapters standing, and pray nine chapters "kneeling, all in chorus, and by memory.

"At the close, they have the holy kiss. Thus: every "one bows down before the other three times, and kisses "twice, men and women promiscuously. This is hard "labour, and they become very warm with the exertion. "I have seen this myself in Odessa; but in some parts,

"they have some variation to this service, and less "kissing.

"Our rhythmical singing, and extempore praying, they "call 'adding to, and taking from, the Word of God.'

"In the provinces where they live and sometimes form "a majority of the population, it is said not to be very "difficult for an Orthodox Russian to leave the Greek "Church and join the Molokans.

"A brother from there tells me, if an Orthodox Russian "wants to join them, he goes to the police-office and "states the fact. Here, he is struck off the book of the "Orthodox, and entered into that of the sects. After that, "a Russian pope visits him and exhorts him to turn from "his error; and if he persists he is considered as a 'heathen "man and a publican,' but receives no further punishment.

"From this you will see how variously the Russian laws "are executed. This mode of procedure is based upon "a secret Imperial ukaze, and for such we, too, are ardently "longing; as there is no probability of the whole law being "altered."

The Molokans are widely scattered. They live in rural settlements for the most part, and are as a rule much more comfortably off than their neighbours. They are intelligent and alert, thrifty and industrious, sober in their habits and conscientious in their dealings. "The Molokans are the most intellectually developed among the whole of our rural population," says a Russian writer. Many of them have become wealthy; but they are also generous, not only to the distressed of their own number, but in wider areas. A Molokan friend of the late Dr. Baedeker, at whose house the doctor was many times a guest when on his missionary

journeys, and whom God had greatly prospered in temporal things, used to say to him—

"Now, doctor, be sure and make use of my purse. Give me the privilege and joy of using my means in the Master's service. You meet with many opportunities where money is useful; let me have fellowship with you. I do not want the Lord to come and find me a rich man!"

In the year 1805 the Emperor Alexander I. gave the Molokans the right "to perform their worship in whatever way their conscience and their interpretation of the Word of God directed" (this is quoted from a document furnished by their leaders in the year 1907). In 1905 a great centenary conference was held in the Molokan colony of Astrakhanka, near the town of Melitopol in the government of Tauria, to celebrate the happy circumstance. "This important event, the posterity of the persecuted men," quoting again their own words, "commemorate in that place to which their afflicted ancestors had first been banished; but which became a retreat, whence by the blessing of God after increasing from a few families to the number of 300,000 souls, they had spread from the mother-colony to numerous other colonies in many parts of Russia." The commemoration took the happy form of a Missionary Conference, at which was prayerfully considered the burning question of the Evangelisation of Russia. Delegates attended from fifteen Russian provinces, and from Finland, Sweden, Germany, and the United States of America.

As a proof that the Conference "meant business," a house was promptly given in which to begin work, as a training college for preachers, teachers, and evangelists;

the money was raised for adapting it and furnishing the rooms; and a teacher was appointed—an earnest Lutheran pastor—to begin work at once.

These New Molokans, or Evangelical Christians as they now prefer to call themselves, are a body full of spiritual enthusiasm and enterprise. Mr. Z. F. Zacharoff, the president of their committee, is an esteemed member of the third States Duma, and has rendered considerable service to the cause of religious liberty within the walls of this Russian House of Commons, and throughout the empire.

It is not possible to ascertain the present numerical strength of the Molokans. They are widely dispersed throughout Russia, and statistics are not available. When M. de Plehve was in office, in 1902, the Government ceased to collect such statistics, on the ground that "the collection of statistics foments disaffection in the minds of the collectors, and at the same time gives them abundant opportunity to sow the seeds of disaffection in the minds of others!" Are they not owls or bats, who shut their eyes tightly against the rising of the sun?

Mr. Z. F. ZACHAROFF.

President of the Molokan Conference, and
Member of the (third) Russian Duma.

CHAPTER VI

Absolutism and Religious Liberty

THE personal predilection of the Tsar upon the throne is the preponderating element in the policy of Russia with respect to the religious aspirations of her people. Accordingly, that policy has been a continuous seesaw, now mildly indulgent, now fanatically hostile, according to the mind of the monarch. The following table will show at a glance the influence of absolutism in Russia, upon religious liberty,[1] since the days of Catharine II.

Catharine II. (1763–1796) . .	Tolerance.
Paul (1796–1801)	Reaction and Repression.
Alexander I. (1801–1825) . .	Tolerance.
Nicholas I. (1825–1855) . . .	Reaction and Repression.
Alexander II. (1856–1881) . .	Tolerance.
Alexander III. (1881–1894) . .	Reaction and Repression.
Nicholas II. (1894–present day) .	Tolerance.

It must not be concluded from the above that there was any substantial and legal liberty of conscience under any Tsar, until the dawn of the present century. Only, one Tsar was less resolute and cruel in the imposition of his will respecting religion upon his subjects, than another—that is all.

The last half-century has witnessed such an expansion of

[1] See *Russian Affairs*, by Geoffrey Drage, p. 5.

revolt against mere superficiality and formality in religion, as has never previously been known under any Tsar. The movement has been so widespread, such numbers have been affected by it, and the present outlook is so bright, that it has become a subject of the profoundest interest to Christians everywhere.

In order to prepare the reader for the development of the story from the date of the accession of Alexander II., it will be helpful to glance briefly at the treatment meted out to the *Jews*, the *Dukhobortzi*, the *Bible Society*, and the *religious exiles in Siberia*, during the previous reigns.

Nicholas I., who expired in the Winter Palace, St. Petersburg, while the Crimean War was in progress, and very shortly after the calamitous news of Alma reached him, had, during the thirty weary years of his rule, proved himself to be the uncompromising foe of spiritual freedom among his subjects.

The *Jews*, who have suffered under every monarch more or less, experienced a terrible time under Nicholas I. By the Military Recruiting Law of his young manhood, he tore little Jewish lads, of tender age, by thousands from the arms of their frantic mothers, banishing them to remote parts of his dominion, to herd with the semi-civilised hordes that made up his armies, if possible to cause them to forget for ever their homes, family ties, religion, and indeed every tender and beautiful feature of their childhood's years.

When Alexander Herzen, the literary pioneer of the Russian revolutionary movement, well known as the editor in London of the Russian weekly *Kolokol*, was marching in a gang of convict-exiles, he "fell in with a convoy of " eight waggon-loads of small Jewish boys, the most of

" them between eight and ten years of age, who were on " the way to military colonies; a third part of them had " already died on the way." [1]

A later ukaze of this ruler enacted that such Jews as wished to remain in Russia, must at least adopt the outward appearance of the general population, in the clipping of their hair to the fashion of their Christian neighbours, the alteration in the character of their clothing, and the obliteration of other hereditary and distinctive marks of the Hebrew.

The *Dukhobortzi* of Southern Russia whose main tenets were, first, that their hereditary leaders were successively reincarnations of the Lord Jesus Christ, and second, that they themselves were incarnations of Deity, and consequently would submit to no external authority, nor heed any external teacher, even the Bible itself being rejected as a superfluity, were subjected to the severest treatment under Nicholas.

Alexander I. (his brother and predecessor) had adopted towards the Dukhobors a truly enlightened and Christian policy. He had paid a visit to England in 1814, and the Society of Friends had availed themselves of his presence in this country to intercede for the Dukhobor people of South Russia, who, in regard to war, held the same principles as themselves. On his return to St. Petersburg, there were laid before him a number of official complaints respecting the Dukhobors, and also several petitions on their behalf. The Tsar, therefore, wrote a letter to the Governor of the province of Kherson, asking him to make

[1] *Impressions of Russia*, by Georg Brandes (trans. from the Danish by S. C. Eastman), p. 258.

careful and sympathetic inquiry into the views and habits of the Dukhobortzi, and report further to himself. In consequence of this inquiry, these "sectarians" enjoyed uninterrupted peace and prosperity during the remainder of his reign.

An extant letter of this monarch reveals such an enlightened, humane, and truly Christian spirit, that no apology is needed for transferring the vital parts of it to these pages. It is dated 6th December 1816.

"To lead back the lost sheep to the fold cannot be done " by force; this being quite contrary to the doctrine of the " Saviour, who came to seek and to save the lost. True " faith is a work of grace, and can only be effected in the " soul by instruction, gentleness, and, most of all, by good " example. . . .

" The Church must neither use nor permit violence " against the erring ones, even should it not approve of their " separation. It is utterly opposed to the spirit of its " Divine Head, when He said, 'But if ye had known what " this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye " would not have condemned the guiltless.' . . .

" I thus commend to your special charge this colony; " and beg of you to inquire personally and impartially into " any reports (of their alleged bad conduct) before receiving " them; and to study the morals and behaviour of these " people so as to give them the shelter they need. Thus, " alone, all will feel that they live under the shelter of the " law, by receiving justice, and they will thus feel love and " sympathy with their rulers.

" Signed by His Majesty's own hand.

" Alexander."

With the advent of Nicholas I., the policy of toleration was peremptorily reversed. By an Imperial ukaze in 1841, Nicholas gave the Dukhobors the option of perverting to the Greek Orthodox Church, or the immediate breaking up of their homes and settlements on the river Don, and transportation to the Caucasus Mountains, then inhabited by wild, ungovernable and dangerous races. On their refusal to submit, the Tsar sent his troops, and they were marched away in gangs by hundreds, leaving homes, farms, stock, unreaped harvests, and all their other possessions behind them, as prey for the spoilers; away to a bleak, unknown, and perilous region, where many died from exposure and starvation, while others fell victims to wild beasts. In all, upwards of four thousand persons were so transported.

The hand of Nicholas fell heavily also upon those *exiles* who, for their faith, had been banished to far Siberia. General Soulema, who was in command of the eastern province of Asiatic Russia, sent word to his Imperial master that the dissenters sought opportunity to propagate their tenets in the districts in which they were located.

"Conversions begin among the people at once," said he, "when a dissenter appears. Wherever he goes he preaches; among the villagers, in the midst of the labour of the mines, or in the kameras of the prisons; and wherever they preach, men and women adopt their doctrines and forsake the true Russian faith."

Nicholas sent back instructions that in order to stop the propagation of heresy, these heretics should all be kept together, isolated from the inhabitants and from the other prisoners; and as a result, the silver mines of Nertchinsk,

in which were the severest toils and the most unhealthy conditions of penal labour in Siberia, were exclusively reserved for the dissenting convicts.

The suppression of the *Bible Society* was one of the earliest and most characteristic incidents of the reign of the iron Emperor.[1] Under the fostering care of the devout Alexander I. this Society had 280 branches at work in the empire.[2] His brother Nicholas condemned it as "a revolutionary association, the object of which is to "shake the foundations of religion, and spread unbelief "in the realm; to kindle in Russia civil war, and foster "rebellion." Under Alexander I. Russia had begun to seek light and grace in "these heavenly pages." But now it was a crime to do so. Nevertheless, underneath the surface of things, the spiritual forces, which had been released, persisted.

"And what were the results of this Bible-reading?" inquired an English writer of a venerable priest.

"Who can tell?" was the reply. "You plant the acorn; "your descendants sit beneath the oak."[3]

The oak grows in the darkness as well as in the day; and hideously dark was the night, before the welcome morning of Alexander II.'s Coronation broke over the realm.

[1] *The Expansion of Russia*, by F. H. Skrine, p. 55.
[2] *Due North*, by M. M. Ballou, p. 237.
[3] *Free Russia*, by W. Hepworth Dixon, p. 209.

PART II

THE REIGN OF TSAR ALEXANDER II.

(1856 to 1881)

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Be of good comfort, Prince; for you are born
To set a form upon that indigest
Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude.

SHAKESPEARE, *King John*.

TSAR & ALEXANDER II.

CHAPTER VII

Bright Hopes

THE Tsar Alexander the Second came to the throne amid international clouds and tempest. A desperate struggle was taking place in the Crimea; a struggle that was to prove unprofitable to every Power taking part in it, with the exception of Turkey. In the ultimate issue, however, it was of no small advantage to Russia herself; because it had the effect of turning the eyes of her statesmen to domestic concerns, instead of allowing them to be fixed so steadily upon affairs beyond her ever-advancing borders. The careful consideration of many schemes of internal improvement and reform, marked the coming of an epoch of progress that in some respects might be compared with the days of Peter the Great.

"He who wants to study the present state of Russia " cannot do so without tracing things back to the 'sixties'; " for here lies not only the origin, but the direction, of the " subsequent social and intellectual (and, we may add, " evangelical) development."[1]

It is not our purpose either to attack or to defend the private life of Alexander II. Our inquiry relates to his policy

[1] *Russian History and Literature* (*Lowell Lectures*, Boston, Mass.), by Prince Wolkonsky, p. 240.

as a ruler and administrator, as far as it affected the progress of vital religion in his realm. In the opening years of his reign his rule was as the genial breath of spring after a long and bitter winter. Inspired by noble sentiments and gifted with a practical mind, the Tsar at the outset undertook great reforms.

To set justice more firmly upon her seat; "to make the bounds of freedom wider yet" in many directions; to extend the application of the principle of self-government; to promote security and contentment among the many races that owned allegiance to his throne; to advance the material and the intellectual prosperity of the empire—these were the great objects upon which Alexander concentrated his attention.

He set justice more firmly upon her seat by the ukazes of 1864, in which he decreed that the judges should be irremovable from their position, and that the lesser functionaries, the *juges d'instruction* should also have fixity of tenure. The processes of law were also reformed, and trial by jury introduced. To appreciate the beneficent intent of these enactments it is necessary to read how in the next reign they were cunningly and scandalously rendered of none effect.[1]

The severity of the censorship of the press was mitigated, and the art of printing came powerfully to the aid of religion in the publication and wide circulation of a variety of religious literature.

The Armenians of Transcaucasia began to dream of a restoration of their ancient nationality. There was serious consideration given to proposals for a separate Armenian

[1] See *Fortnightly Review*, June 1905, p. 1024.

state; of course under the protection and sovereignty of the Tsar.

Among the excellent ideas introduced by Alexander during these happy years of reform, was the institution of the *Zemstvo*, an institution that has played a noble part in the advance of Russia towards freedom; and that appears likely to fulfil a still greater purpose in the same holy cause in the near future.

The position of the *mir* in its relation to the rural district in Russia has already been explained. What the *mir* was to the village, the *Zemstvo* is to the wider area. It is practically a provincial council for local self-government. It is true that its powers are severely restricted. But it is an elected public body; and is thus a public voice, a voice which has already made itself heard in the empire, and with good effect.

The grant of local self-government to the provinces in 1864 was followed by a similar measure for the towns and cities in 1871.

With the name of Alexander II. will ever be associated his great and beneficent measure, the emancipation of twenty-two and a half million Russian serfs. No human being who has ever lived has been able and willing to do good to his fellow-creatures in such a vital matter as their personal liberty, on such a stupendous scale.

This emancipation ukaze was the deliberate personal act of Alexander. He took the momentous step, notwithstanding that there were many who strongly expressed disapproval and who uttered ominous predictions as to the consequences. Let the name of Alexander the Emancipator be held in honour!

"The present sovereign of Russia, by the emancipation "of the serfs," said Mr. Gladstone, "has placed himself in "the front rank of the philanthropic legislators of the "world." [1]

The ukaze was signed by the Tsar on 19th February 1861. Under his rule too, although the banished were not recalled from Siberia, nor their stern sentences revoked, yet the outward stream of exiles marching Eastwards in that tremendous and never-ceasing procession, considerably diminished in volume. That savage implement of punishment, the knout, with its leather thongs, and ends of lead, that has torn the flesh in long strips from the backs of so many servants of God, leaving ghastly furrows behind, was given a little less to do. Of this period it may be said in some measure, "Then had the churches rest . . . and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

The *Bible Society* early reappeared, under a new name, for "*Bible Society*" was altogether too presumptuous and daring a title for it to assume in those timid times. It was designated "*The Society for the Encouragement of Moral and Religious Reading.*" It developed a tentative organisation, which spread its activities into the provinces near the capital; and through it, as through an unshuttered window, the sunshine of Divine truth began again to fall upon the nation.

The Dukhobortzi, in the remote Caucasus, enjoyed under Alexander II. a season of quiet and of comparative prosperity. At the conclusion of the war with Turkey in 1878 the territory ceded by the Sultan, the district of which Kars

[1] *Contemporary Review*, November 1876, p. 877.

is the centre, was practically handed over to the Dukhobors to colonise, special inducements being offered to them to occupy it. Their numbers also greatly increased, until they totalled, in the Caucasus alone, upwards of twenty thousand persons. "They are good agriculturalists, and specially remarkable for their kind treatment of animals."[1]

The inroad into the Greek Orthodox monopoly of the marriage service took place during this reign. In the year 1876 the "Old Believers" enjoyed for the first time the privilege of conducting legal marriage ceremonies in their own places of worship; thus obviating the cruel necessity of having to hear in the future, as until that date, epithets of shame attached to their wives and children.

Thus the restrictive cords that tightly bound and well-nigh throttled the people, being eased, the huge limbs of the Russian giant began to move and stretch. Some of his attitudes and grimaces were, at the least, startling. Religious sects began to increase and multiply with almost riotous exuberance. All works upon the Russian people give ample space to these sects. It has been said that there are several hundred different varieties, the great majority of them having their origin in the middle of the last century.

Further reference will be made to the beliefs of the Russian "sectarians" in a later chapter. It may be sufficient at present to say that one thing appears to be quite certain: the greater the peculiarities of the sect, and the wilder its extravagances, the more prominently it has been brought into public notice; and thus the true proportion of these fervent, and frequently misguided little

[1] *Russian Pictures, Drawn with Pen and Pencil*, by T. Michell, p. 154.

groups, and their exact relation to the Russian non-Orthodox movement as a whole, have been grievously misrepresented.

At this point the German and Dutch colonists of the South of Russia begin to play a most important part in the religious life of the country of their adoption, as will be seen in the succeeding chapters of this story. It will be well, therefore, to take a glance at them. These western Protestants came to Russia as agriculturalists on the invitation of Catharine II., nearly a hundred years before. She hoped that their industrious and cleanly habits, their improved methods of husbandry, and their shrewdness and thrift, would prove a powerful stimulus in the same directions to the Russian peasantry among whom she located their settlements. The results did not warrant her optimism. The villages of the German and Dutch settlers to this day present in every respect a marked contrast to those of the Russians.[1] In the one there are cleanliness, neatness, industry, and evidences of a general condition of comfort and prosperity. The inhabitants are eager to show hospitality to strangers. Among the moujiks of the ordinary Russian village, where the breath of non-Orthodoxy has not stirred the age-long soul death, the contrary is the case.

Many of these foreign colonists had with greater alacrity accepted the invitation to migrate to Southern Russia in consequence of the persecution they had suffered for their faith under the dominant church in their own country. There were considerable numbers of Mennonites and Baptists among them; and by the original covenants under which these foreign families settled on the Russian steppes,

[1] See *Russia*, by Sir A. Mackenzie Wallace, vol. i. p. 306.

each colony was permitted, with strict safeguards against proselytism, to practise its own religious faith. In the district of Sarepta on the Volga River several colonies of Moravian Brethren were settled in the year 1765 on the same conditions.[1]

Thus here and there in the borders of the enormous forests, on the banks of the mighty rivers, and dotted over the wide steppes of Southern Russia, little companies of men and women met together to read Luther's translation of the Bible, to pray, and to sing the inspiring songs of the Western Reformation. And as they sang in the darkness, their native-born neighbours listened, as did the prisoners in Philippi to the singing of Paul and Silas, eighteen hundred years before.

The Russians were inapt pupils in respect of foreign methods of husbandry; but some of them learned from their evangelical neighbours "diviner things," as will be seen in the next chapter.

All Moravian, Mennonite, and Baptist churches and their pastors, under Alexander II., obtained an important measure of State recognition in the year 1879, that stood them in good stead when the reactionary era of Pobiedonostzeff set in with rigour. One condition of legal recognition was that the Provincial Government should countersign the appointment of the pastor.

[1] *Russian Pictures*, by T. Michell, p. 115.

CHAPTER VIII

The Story of the Stundists in the South[1]

"HEARKEN, my beloved brethren, hath not God "chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and "heirs of the Kingdom?" What delight and triumph this fact has brought in this last half-century to many thousands of lowly Russian moujiks! These moujiks, the chosen of God, "rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom," were, from the beginning of the movement, called Stundists.

The name is derived from the German word, "Stunden" (hours), which was used by the German colonists to describe the practice of setting apart certain hours for Christian fellowship in prayer, and Bible study.

Russian Stundism was born in the Province of Kherson among the Ruthenian peasantry, in or about the year 1858.

We have seen the Gospel light burning in the dwellings of the German peasant settlers. But they never attempted to make converts among their Russian neighbours, for the simple reason that proselytising (except by the Greek

[1] For many interesting particulars of those early days of Evangelicalism in Russia, indebtedness is gratefully acknowledged to the records of the German Baptist Mission, and the *Life and Work of the late Pastor J. G. Oncken of Hamburg*, by Rev. J. H. Cooke.

Orthodox Church, which enjoyed a monopoly in this matter) was forbidden by fierce laws, attached to which were threatenings of dreadful pains and penalties. "He that is Orthodox let him be Orthodox still," was the unalterable rule; and although doubtless many a Lutheran, or a Mennonite, or a Moravian, pitying the ignorance in the shaggy heads of the moujiks around him, and the sinful darkness of their souls, longed to point them to the Lamb of God, yet the risks were too fearful.

The first moujik converts from Orthodoxy and indifference were three peasants—Ratushny, Lassotsky (of the province of Kieff), and Rjaboshapka; the two former, farm labourers; the latter, a blacksmith; and each a serf in the old days. Rjaboshapka[1] worked for a godly master, a German named Martin Hubeer, whose spiritual character and scriptural conversation led him, by the Divine blessing, into the light. A few years later, to his great joy, he discovered other believers, among whom was Michael Ratushny of the village of Bessoka in the district of Odessa, Kherson Province. Of the conversion of Ratushny we have interesting details.[2]

It happened that Ratushny had been in the habit of hiring himself out for harvest labour to a devout German farmer, for several years in succession. The labourer was a thoughtful man, although illiterate; and there sprung up a friendship between his employer and himself. The farmer at length dared to invite the Russian to attend one of the meetings. Ratushny went. This happened in the

[1] See *Report of Berlin Baptist Congress*, 1908; Address by Rev. V. Pavloff.

[2] *The Russian Peasantry*, by Stepniak, p. 557.

autumn of the year 1858 or 1859. It was just an ordinary cottage-meeting, consisting of prayers by those present, the reading of the Bible, and a brief exhortation, and a few hymns. But it was an eye-opener to Michael Ratushny. Was this religion? There was not an *ikon* to be seen, although he looked instinctively towards the usual corner of the room when he entered, with a view to making his humble obeisance and crossing himself as he had always done before, on entering a dwelling however humble; there was no pope present, to bless the people; he could understand what was said—not the meaning but the language. He would like to know the meaning as well. It was all so strange, so revolutionary.

He thought much upon it. He talked to the German about it. When he returned to his village after harvest, he spoke to his Russian neighbours about it. They were all mystified, and decided to ask the parish pope about it at the next meeting of the *mir*.

When the *mir* met, the pope was present as usual, and these inquisitive Orthodox were not long in coming to the point. But they got little satisfaction from the pope. Their first question floored him completely. He did not know half as much as they could tell him, ignorant as they were. He had never taken the trouble to make himself acquainted with the deadly teachings of the heretics. There had never been any necessity for him to do so. As for the beliefs and ceremonies of the true Church of Christ, the Greek Orthodox, the Holy Russian Church, he could not exactly explain them, much less defend them, but of course they were right, and heresy was wrong.

The peasants trooped out into the silent snow that lay

so wide and white beneath the stars, and went to their little wooden homes, their *izbas* in the village of Osnova, to sleep over the stove with their families—no not to sleep; but to think deep, deep thoughts, about God, and death, and life, and eternity, and parrot-like popes, and fervent German cottage meetings.

They were all at Ratushny's *izba* the next day to talk over these marvellous matters, and all through that winter they met for the same purpose, going from *izba* to *izba*, as the early church did; and before the winter was over Michael Ratushny was a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the first pastor of the first Stundist Church, with a Russian membership, within the empire.

The neighbouring Germans were of the greatest assistance to these "babes in Christ." They gave them advice in their perplexities, taught them more fully in the Word of God, and showed them the utmost sympathy as fellow-believers. When ultimately these Russian peasants were arrested and tried, they bravely uttered not a word that would tend to implicate their German friends in their breach of the laws.

The growth of Stundism was exceedingly rapid. Village after village inquired "concerning this way." It spread like an infection. The peasantry were inquiring respecting Bible religion, in all directions. There were meetings for prayer, and if by the good providence of God anybody was present, however dirty his sheepskin, and limited his vocabulary, who could tell them anything to their souls' profit, they were all agape to hear it. They were not eager for freshness either. The same things were said over and over again; but they never failed to evoke the most

fervent responses from the little assembly that had crowded into the hut. "*Ikons* were dead and useless! It was wicked to worship them; the Holy Bible said so. God alone was to be worshipped, and He was in heaven. Jesus was the Saviour of us all, and not St. Nicholas, or St. Andrew, or St. Jonah, or even the Virgin Mary. He who truly repents, need not confess his sins to the pope. Jesus will forgive our sins, without paying for masses. Lying, and drunkenness, and theft, and swearing, are sins that need to be repented of and put away. No sincere Christian lives in such sins, for God hates them."

These were the elementary articles of the creed of these peasant-students of the mysteries of God. And as they learned them, at the feet of itinerating Stundist preachers, the village wherein they were taught became a transformed place. For the people were in many cases converted, an entire village at once. Tough superstitions, centuries old, dropped from the minds and hearts of their victims like the bands from the limbs of the three Hebrew youths in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. Witchery, and omens, and evil spirits, and fetishes, cannot breathe in the atmosphere of the truth of God. The vodka-shop was forsaken, old feuds were healed, habits of industry began to take the place of the disorderly and reckless manner of life, so common before. The people lifted up their heads, for their redemption drew nigh.

With the utmost patience and diligence the moujiks set themselves the task of learning to read. In the fifteen winters of 1860 to 1875 many thousands of the Russian peasantry, the wives and the children as well, spent the long hours of darkness in committing to memory the thirty-

A STUNDIST MEETING.

From the Painting by NICOLAS BOGDANOFF-BELSKY
in the "Alexander III. Museum for Russian Art," St. Petersburg.

six puzzling letters of the Russian alphabet (one looks at the strange symbols with something of affection when this circumstance comes to mind) in order that they might be able to read for themselves those portions of the precious volume that they had contrived to purchase, or had borrowed from a fortunate neighbour.

He who first succeeded in mastering the difficulties of orthography was immediately constituted a teacher of others, and unweariedly plodded from cottage to cottage, and over the snows in the moonlight and in the storm, in order to impart these rudiments of knowledge to the people in distant villages. They had discovered a better use for candles than burning them in the churches before the tinselled *ikons*. While the wintry mantle lay white upon field and forest without, the peasant family gathered in the dim candle-light of their dwelling, spelt slowly, verse by verse through the sublime Gospel stories, and buried the words deep in their hearts, until it was no uncommon thing among the Stundists for them to be able to repeat entire chapters from memory. Never did thirsty hart pant more eagerly for the waterbrooks, than these spirit-quickened men and women panted for the Water of Life.

When the Stundist preachers were arrested and tried for proclaiming with the living voice the truth of God, the publicity of their police examinations set hundreds and thousands to the secret reading of the Bible, in order to discover the nature of the deadly heresies, for which their neighbours were so severely dealt with.

Wherever Stundism made its power felt, there was an end to the influence of the *ikons*. Some were contemptuously flung out of the open window or door. Others

were carefully collected and taken to the pope's house and left there, the owners saying they had no further use for them. One remarkable feature of the awakening was the utter helplessness of the village popes. They were completely silenced, except to complain to the *ispravnik* when he passed their dwelling on horseback, of the falling off in their meagre fees for masses, and the imminent danger that the baptismal fees might fail also. The Stundist movement placed a new and formidable weapon in the hands of the moujik when contracting with the pope for his ecclesiastical services.

"Now, little father," he would say, "if you will not be reasonable and take my offer for the masses, I will complain to the *mir*, and we will all become Stundists, and you will get no roubles from any of us!"[1]

When the men ran short as preachers, the women took up the crusade, and with eloquence and fervour told the glad tidings. Even the boys and girls took a share in the Stundist propaganda.

"Hearing my little son read aloud from the Scriptures, I was pierced to the heart, and felt that I must forsake my sins and turn to God," said a prisoner, when asked to account for the deadly offence of his religion.

The mild rule of the early years of the reign of Alexander II. enabled Stundism to strike its roots deep and wide into the hearts and lives of the peasantry, as a young oak will grip mother-earth, so that when later the fierce wintry storms arose, the withering leaves were indeed carried away, but the tree defied the blasts, and grew but the stronger.

[1] See *The Russian Peasantry*, by Stepniak, p. 135.

From the ranks of the "Old Believers" in particular, the Stundists secured thousands of recruits. These dissenters, as we have seen, had already suffered for their departure from the Orthodox Church, and were thus prepared for the next step, viz. to learn the utter insufficiency of saint veneration, and picture worship, and ceremonial observance, to satisfy the soul's craving for spiritual knowledge, and the life and love of God. When they heard the Gospel, they eagerly cast aside the little toys of their spiritual childhood, and pressed into light and liberty.

The preaching of the women was with great power. An enemy of Stundism gave this testimony respecting them—

"Their example was as eloquent as their oratory. Their "huts were clean, comfortable, and well provided with all "the necessaries of life. Their fields were well tilled; "their cattle sleek and prosperous; and generally all their "surroundings bore witness to the worldly—if not heavenly "—wisdom of the principles by which they were guided; "and the apathetic Russian peasant, seeking, like Saul, "for an ass, a cow, or a horse, found an imperishable "crown."

Complaint was made of them that "they do not stand in "awe of the constituted authorities, when these stand "between them and their consciences. . . . Even when it "is a question of the sacred person of His Majesty the "Emperor. . . . And they actually quote Scripture in "support of these views!"

The delightful change that the conversion of the Russian moujik and his wife made in the condition of the interior of their *izba* is continually referred to by writers upon

Russian social life.[1] For example, Prince Kropotkin in his interesting and pathetic autobiography outlines this scene of his boyhood—

"My former nurse, Vasilisa, lived in the village. Her "family was of the poorest. . . . They belonged to a non-"conformist sect. There was no bound to her joy when "I came to see her. Cream, eggs, apples, and honey were "all that she could offer; but the way in which she offered "them, in bright wooden plates, after having covered the "table with a fine snow-white linen tablecloth of her own "making (with the Russian nonconformists absolute "cleanliness is a matter of religion) . . . left the warmest "feelings in my heart."[2]

The men were ever eager to carry the good tidings farther afield. It was fully understood that every convert must be an evangelist. As soon as the long labours of the harvest were ended, the moujiks started forth, with a Bible in their pocket and a wooden spoon thrust into their long boot-leg, to tramp to the surrounding villages and districts, and preach the Gospel.

Before many months had passed, the cup of Kherson Gospel-joy had run over. Into the neighbouring provinces of Ekaterinoslav, Kharkov, Poltava, and still farther afield, to the steppes of the Don Cossacks, the ancient ecclesiastical city of Kieff, and away even to the walls of Moscow swept the mighty blessing.

Hitherto the bright side of the story has been told. There is unhappily another and a dreadfully dark side. Early Stundism was baptized in blood. Like Saul of

[1] See *Through Russia on a Mustang*, by T. Stevens, p. 310.
[2] *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, by Prince Kropotkin, vol. i. p. 52.

Tarsus on his conversion, these Russian believers had to suffer great things for His name's sake.

It was not to be expected that the Greek Orthodox Church would quietly submit to the overturning of her influence among the moujiks, and the cancelling of her pecuniary interests in the parishes. Indeed, in one German colony, so complete was the revolt, that the pastor (a Lutheran) retired from the scene, and left his school-house and even his church in the hands of the dissenters, who used them for the purposes of teaching and preaching. This was in Alt Danzig near Elizavetgrad in South Russia.

A visiting evangelist who held meetings in this church wrote: "I had enough to do all day preaching to crowded congregations. Amongst my hearers were even members of the local nobility, who came from considerable distances in their droshkies." The priests denounced the leaders to the civil authorities, and a course of persecution more or less severe according to the temper of the local officials, began.

On 5th July 1867, seven brethren in Odessa were imprisoned, among whom was Michael Ratushny; but two English travellers, who were then in the town, went immediately to the Crimea, where the Tsar was then staying in his palace in Lividia, had an interview with His Majesty, and secured their release. Others were much less fortunate. The Governor of the Province of Kherson proved to be a bitter foe of the Stundists and used his authority in the direction of severe repression. A priest in Kieff published a violent pamphlet against the Stundists in which he said—

"Better had it been for us that the pestilence of cholera had broken out amongst us, than this heresy. For the

spiritual disease is far more deadly, and much more to be dreaded, than the physical malady."

In one village we hear of the Stundists being tied to the church railings; and all the people going into the church are ordered to spit in their faces.

At Lubonirka near Odessa, the moujik, Ivan Rjaboshapka, before mentioned, bought a New Testament, and his neighbours gathered together to hear him read it. At the instigation of the popes, the police surprised one of their meetings, arrested them all and stripped and flogged them. An old woman of seventy received eighteen terrible lashes upon her bare back. Ivan was so cruelly flogged that the ground all around was splashed with his blood, and a callous pope who stood looking on exclaimed—

"Yes, beat him to death. He deserves it. He is a son of Satan!"

In the neighbourhood of Nicholaieff in Constantinofka village, in the Kherson Province, a ferocious and intoxicated mob attacked a prayer-meeting on 2nd January 1872, and dragged those found there to the prison through the miry roads. Five men and one woman in particular were there most fearfully mauled. At intervals during the whole day these six, who were bound, practically naked, to benches, were flogged in so barbarous a fashion that the flesh was almost stripped from their bones. In the village of Bastanka some of the people received as many as one hundred and fifty strokes, so that a few days afterwards the splinters of the wood were taken out of their tortured flesh. A doctor who saw these victims was so exasperated, that he sent a complaint to the Governor-general, but this had no effect.

Enough of this! It was not in the power of pope, or Governor, or devil, to hinder the rising of the tide of blessing in South Russia, as subsequent years have proved. It is rising still. These humble peasants are fertile soil for the Gospel seed, as are their rich steppes for wheat.

Mrs. Baedeker was taken out from Odessa by her husband to see some of these steppe villages and their inhabitants; and thus she had an opportunity of making acquaintance with them at close quarters. They rode out in a hay-cart into which they climbed by means of a ladder. The seat was a strong leathern strap or belt suspended across the cart. The journey into the steppe was begun early in the morning, but night had fallen ere they reached their destination.

The scenery was very monotonous; on every side as they went forward, hour after hour, stretched the wide plain of rich black earth—it is said to be thirty feet in depth. The corn crops reaped from it are usually splendid in quantity and in quality.

The cottage in which they were to be entertained was crowded to the doors with alert but silent visitors—moujiks and their wives. The benches round the room against the wall were filled with the womenfolk, while the men for the most part sat on the cross-benches or lounged in silence where there was a vacant space.

"What are all these people here for?" inquired Mrs. Baedeker of her husband, as they took their seats by the table in the midst of the throng.

He smiled, but gave her no answer.

"Are they going to have a meeting?"

"Oh no! They have only come to look at you."

"I don't think it will be very pleasant, while we are

having supper!" said the lady, looking disconcertedly around upon the great array of watchful eyes.

"They don't want anything from you," said her husband apologetically. "They only want to see you. They don't get the privilege of the sight of a lady from England every day. Never mind them."

But when the great pile of mattresses, stored at one side of the room, came to be distributed on the benches, the stove and the floor, and preparations were made for the night's repose under conditions that gave no opportunity for privacy, the "lady from England" breathed a sigh of intense relief when the venerable matron, who presided over the numerous household, extinguished the candle!

Amid such homely surroundings, innumerable Gospel meetings were held, and spiritual harvests were reaped even more abundant than the wheat-harvests of the steppe around.

CHAPTER IX

The Radstock Awakening in the North

THE aristocracy of St. Petersburg, that city of palaces, following, alas, the French fashion of thought and of conduct, as well as of speech, and finding no summons to a nobler life in the ministry of their Orthodox Church, have for generations drifted away from Divine truth and vital godliness.

"Among people in Russia with any education at all," said a Russian author,[1] "a man who is not a materialist, a "thorough materialist, would really be a curiosity."

"The educated class in Russian society has long been "notable for its indifference to religion," said another competent witness. "You cannot say it detests religion. It "is indifferent to religion. To be a religious person is not "the thing."[2]

A lamentable state of affairs among the leisured classes of society in the Russian capitals, in the middle of the nineteenth century, has been disclosed by writers of the period, by later novelists in their delineations of it, and by the Russian contemporary Press.

[1] *Underground Russia*, by Stepniak, p. 7.

[2] *Russia, Political and Social*, by L. Tikhomirof (translated from the French by Edward Aveling, D.Sc.), vol. i. p. 223.

Fashionable life appears to have been one ceaseless round of the pursuit of pleasure and folly. The theatre, the dance, sexual intrigue, the gluttonous feast, the drunken carousal, were the ordinary features of the daily round. Flippant, superficial, vain in their manners and appearance; flagrantly immoral in the great multitude of cases in their modes of life;[1] the disgusting vices of their fellows, their daily jest; daring and systematic in their exploiting of the offices of the State, in order that the booty secured by their rapacity might be squandered in riotous living;[2] possessed of seared consciences that failed to rebuke, and of callous hearts that showed no pity to the victims of their vicious indulgences or fierce revenges; without thought of God above, or of judgment to come, to check their misdeeds; Russian society young and old was a painted and gilded rottenness, hideous within.

Into the midst of this moral lazaretto came the breath of the Holy Spirit of God. Men and women began to seek His face. The Bible received attention. They that feared the Lord spake one to another timidly, in a whisper at first, but gradually with more courage. They talked of religion, and of the saving grace of God, when paying their social calls; and of the beauty of holiness, and the work of redemption, and the coming of the Divine Kingdom. They arranged little meetings for prayer and Bible-study in their drawing-rooms and ballrooms, and invited their like-minded neighbours to join them. Others of their acquaintance, hearing of these gather-

[1] See *Russian Characteristics*, by E. B. Lanin, p. 306.

[2] See *Behind the Scenes in the Country of the Tsar*, by B. von Sydakoff, pp. 49, 69 et seq.

ings, asked permission to attend. These also received the blessing.

It appears that about the year 1873 certain Russian ladies of noble birth were travelling in Switzerland, where they were attracted by Gospel meetings. These meetings were conducted by M. Monod, M. de Pressensé, Lord Radstock, a young British military officer who had served in the Crimean War, and others. Lord Radstock was invited to visit St. Petersburg and conduct similar meetings in that city, which he did in the successive winters of 1874–1877.

The earliest of these services were held in the Congregational Church (better known as the American Church) in the city. But later, meetings were held in the salons of the aristocratic residences of the more prominent persons identified with this remarkable movement. The house of Princess Lieven in Rue Morskaja, close to the Winter Palace, and St. Isaac's Cathedral, became ultimately the headquarters of the meetings. In the handsome ballroom of this mansion, such meetings have been held uninterruptedly until the present day. Although productive of extraordinary results, these services were really of the simplest character — the familiar drawing-room Bible-reading and prayer-meeting. Being unacquainted with the Russian tongue, Lord Radstock preached in French; this naturally restricted his ministrations to the educated classes, except when an interpreter translated the address into the native language, for the benefit of a more numerous assembly.

With characteristic vehemence, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, his lordship threw himself into these meetings on his several visits to the city; and he had the delight of

a great reaping time. Many will bless God through eternity for the Gospel addresses delivered by him in St. Petersburg.

The new converts speedily began to show their faith by their works, in making efforts for the welfare of the souls around them. The ladies vied with the gentlemen in their zeal for the kingdom of God. Visitations of factories, hospitals, and prisons were arranged. "It was no uncommon sight to see a great lady to whom all the salons of St. Petersburg were open, skurrying through the streets in a humble droshky, to read and to pray by the bedside of some dying girl in the foul ward of the lock hospital. . . . No place was too dark for them to refuse to illumine it with the radiance of their presence. The world wondered and passed on; but the work grew."[1]

Three notable personalities in Russian society, who were converted under Lord Radstock's preaching, were Colonel Paschkoff, Count Bobrinsky, and Count Korff. These three brethren conducted meetings for prayer and the preaching of the Gospel, after the departure of Lord Radstock. The mansion of Colonel Paschkoff on the Gagarin Quay, on at least one occasion, accommodated upwards of a thousand persons who had come to hear the Word. Pobiedonostzeff asserted that "more than fifteen hundred persons were present, representing every grade of society."[2] Peasants, and members of princely families, students from the university, and military officers resplendent in their uniforms, and even monks and priests were amongst the crowds that thronged the doors to secure admission.[3]

[1] *The Truth about Russia*, by W. T. Stead, p. 356.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 373.
[3] *Daily News*, 10th June 1880.

Madame Paschkoff usually presided at the American organ, and her daughters helped to lead the singing. The hymns were Russian versions of familiar English hymns, to tunes adapted to the tastes of the Russian people in regard to music. All three of the above-mentioned noblemen gave expositions of the Scriptures and addresses, each having his distinctive gifts as a public speaker. Count Korff appealed to the intelligence of his hearers, mainly; Colonel Paschkoff was mighty in the Scriptures, and arrested the attention of his hearers by his earnest and forcible utterances; while Count Bobrinsky, who earned the name the "Spurgeon of Russia," spoke with great vivacity and freedom.

When the summer months began, and "society" left the capital, these evangelists also departed for their estates, and threw open their schlosses far away in the provinces, in the same manner as they had thrown open their mansions in St. Petersburg, for the preaching of the Gospel. The peasants were electrified. It was so startlingly new, and so delightfully welcome. The good news would have been "as cold waters to a thirsty soul," even if brought to them in an earthen pitcher by a hunted Stundist; but to have the water of life proffered to these sheepskin-clad moujiks, in silver tankards, was every way most sensational. When Count Bobrinsky was passing through Moscow on his way to his estates in the south, his hotel was besieged by multitudes, who begged him to preach the Gospel to them. Nor did he refuse.

The venerable George Müller of Bristol, Reginald Radcliffe, Dr. F. W. Baedeker,[1] and other servants of God

[1] See *Dr. Baedeker, and his Apostolic Work in Russia*, ch. ix., "In St. Petersburg Drawing-Rooms," p. 75.

whose names are fragrant among Evangelical Christians in England, were privileged to share in that season of the gracious manifestation of the Spirit of God.

While it was not to be by means of the aristocracy of the stately northern capital, but through the simple peasantry of the wide and silent southern steppes, that God was to bestow the fulness of the blessings of Gospel truth and grace upon Russia, yet He would not leave Himself without witness among the great, and mighty, and noble, of the land.

All this was not unnoticed by the "most Holy Governing Synod"; and when, a few years later, Pobiedonostzeff came into power, it was determined that a peremptory end should be put to it. This was accomplished by issuing an order for the banishment of the chief offenders, who were given ten days in which to pack up and leave Russia.

"Colonel Paschkoff is leaving for England next week," is the pathetic ending of a *Daily News* telegram, conveying the news of the silencing of the St. Petersburg evangelicals. But this is anticipating.

CHAPTER X

How the Gospel was Smuggled into Russian Poland

HE who has once crossed the Russian frontier will not forget the experience. No Government watches her borders more keenly, or subjects her visitors to more jealous examination, than does the Russian; and that, not from considerations of import duties and revenue, but rather for political reasons, and as a measure of protection against the iconoclast and the nihilist.

If Poland had had well-defined natural frontiers of mountain or sea, she might still have been an independent nation in Europe. Imaginary lines across wide plains, were frank invitations to the powerful and restless imperial plunderers on every side; and we know the results. This weakness of the frontier lines of Poland, in its partitioned condition, has been greatly for the furtherance of the Gospel. The boundary between Russian Poland and German Poland fifty years ago, was crossed and recrossed many times by messengers of the German and Polish evangelical churches, who carried with them the contraband seed of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ into Russia, where it was scattered broadcast, and in due season produced the harvest that we see to-day in Russian Poland.

Hundreds of Polish evangelical believers removed from Germany into Russian Poland in the early sixties, in response to the Emperor's offer of a safe asylum in Russia, to such Poles as would refuse to join in the Polish insurrection. This immigration laid the foundations within the Russian borders, of many Christian churches. These Polish immigrants became active centres of evangelisation. One convert after another was added to their little churches. One such church reported, for one year alone, an increase in membership of seventy persons from the surrounding Polish and German settlers.

Earnest and affecting appeals were sent home to their former pastors and teachers, to come and help them gather in the harvest of the spiritual awakening. They came. I cannot forbear giving one picture of such a journey by one of the bravest and most faithful of these frontier pioneers, brother G. F. Alf.

"My recent journey into Russia was one demanding "much patience. It was not by train or steamboat, at "the rate of a hundred or two hundred miles per day; but "in a waggon drawn by one horse, which slowly and with "much difficulty made its way through the rain and snow, "over heavy and almost unfrequented roads.

"At length we reached Sorocin at ten o'clock at night, "after a journey of *eleven days* from Warsaw. At one time "we lost all trace of the road; all around was marsh and "forest. Night was coming on, and we were not a little "thankful, when a Russian peasant with two horses, came "along and attached them to our waggon. Soon we "arrived at a village, where we engaged another peasant "as guide. Through narrow paths covered with brush-

'wood, over lonely hills and down still lonelier valleys we "went, till at last through a thick wood we reached the "clearing on which Brother Kelm's house stands. I "had to give the peasants two silver roubles for their "help.

"The next day was Sunday, and I had the great joy of "preaching to my old friends. Great was their astonish- "ment and joy when they saw me. They were almost "inclined to exclaim, 'It is his angel!' Tears of gladness "and thankfulness ran down our cheeks. . . .

"On Thursday we went on to Horozic, about forty versts "to the east. When we arrived, a horn was blown, and "immediately the people came together from all parts of "the forest; and in the spacious dining-hall of an ancient "ruined castle, I held a meeting. . . . Eighty-three families "reside here, of whom sixty-six are families of our members."

These devoted brethren crossed and recrossed the frontier many times, and became painfully familiar with the horrible interiors of the local prison-houses, and with the crooked practices of some Russian officials. For the most part their experiences were hard and bitter.

The following narrative vividly portrays the perils and the blessings of this furtive itineration. Brother Weist, one of the earliest of the little band of evangelist-adventurers, whose sphere of service lay within the German-Poland border, tells the story. The date is November 1858:—

"The day following when we had arrived at the frontier "we bent our knees before the King of kings and prayed "that He would open unto us a door of utterance in the "long barricaded Russian Empire. The first proof that

" the Lord had heard our prayer we received immediately " afterwards when, our luggage being examined at the " custom-house, a parcel containing Bibles and tracts, " which we had doubted much whether we should be " permitted to import, was not even noticed by the officer. " Then we went on our way rejoicing.

"The unspeakably miserable cottages, and their as " wretched inhabitants, who are not a great way in advance " of savages, called forth our deepest compassion.

"A variety of ornamental images were to be met with " everywhere. We took up our lodgings at P. where " we found a tolerable inn. At length on the 27th " November, after many exertions, we reached A., the " place of our destination. The joyful news that we had " arrived soon spread through the whole neighbourhood, " and in the evening—it was Saturday—I found myself in " the midst of a number of persons who were hungering " for the bread of life. They had assembled with the " *schulze* (magistrate) of the place, and I proclaimed the glad " tidings of great joy that same evening and on the following " Sunday. The remainder of the time was fully spent in " examining and baptizing nine persons.

"On the day following, we continued the examination " of candidates. The statements which they made on " their religious experience surpassed anything we had " expected; and though occasionally something unscrip- " tural was mixed up with their views, which we endeavoured " to rectify, they yet gave sufficient evidence to the reality " of their conversion, and to the healthy tone of their " religious life in general; so that in the evening we had " the happiness of baptizing seventeen more. Our baptistry

" was a little brook that flowed gently along by the house
" of the *schulze.*

" On the 30th we proceeded to visit another German
" colony at K. But on the way we met our enemies,
" the feaster and the second magistrate of A., who had
" just been lodging an accusation against us with the *Woit.*
" In consequence of this, we had scarcely arrived at K.
" when the *Woit* took away from us our passports in order
" to send them to P., where also he commanded us to
" appear on the morrow. However, he permitted me to
" conduct a meeting which was waiting for us, at which I
" explained to the people our church order, as I appre-
" hended that I might perhaps not see them again.

" On the 1st of December we accordingly went to the
" police office (Landrath Amt) at P. where, as soon as
" our accusers, together with the Lutheran clergyman, had
" arrived, we were arrested and locked up in the city-tower,
" to wait there for the decision of the court in our case.
" The first impression which this prison made upon us was
" not very winning; for when we entered, we espied a
" dirty fellow, sitting near the stove, in the act of freeing
" himself of the vermin with which his person seemed
" to be thoroughly infested. He and three very similar
" individuals, male and female, were now to be our com-
" panions. However, Brother Schimanski (our Polish
" interpreter) preached the Gospel to them in Polish, and
" prayed earnestly with them, by which means one of
" these unfortunate women was moved so much that her
" spirit was broken and her tears flowed abundantly.

" As we could praise our God in brotherly fellowship,
" like Paul and Silas, the time passed very agreeably.

" Brother S. too, a physician, one of the new converts " who had remained in town to provide all possible " comforts for us, and had made arrangements with the " jailer to supply us with food, and fresh bundles of straw, " considered it the highest honour to be permitted to stay " and spend the night with us.

"The next day the brethren were walking up and down " the market-place, outside our prison, anxiously waiting " to hear what would become of us. We sang hymns of " praise to encourage them. Even to the townspeople it " was not a little mysterious why 'those imprisoned " Prussians' should be in so good spirits.

"About noon we were summoned to appear before the " court, and minutes were taken of our statements. At " the end of the examination, we were told that the *Nats-* " *zelling* (the higher police) would probably have us trans- " ported over the frontier in fetters; after which we were " escorted to the large state prison.

"We had now to experience the most painful part— " separation from one another. Each was placed in a " different cell, secured by high walls and iron doors, and " we were surrounded by a multitude of criminals, so that " we could no longer join in praising God. The inspector " of the prison was a hard-hearted man who would not " permit Dr. S. to supply us with food, but ordered us " the prisoners' fare, which was scarcely as good as what " swine are fed with. Yet I was better off than my " brethren, because I was lodged in the prison hospital, " where I had at least a clean berth, while they had to lie " on the naked floor with the crowd, exposed to the vermin, " which infested the place. Also, the hospital was not

" always shut; so that I could go to them sometimes, and " encourage them, by speaking to them through a hole in " the door.

" On Saturday, the 4th of December, my two companions " were tried again. The assessor, whose duty it was this " time to examine the prisoners, was a friendly man, who " spoke German pretty well, and would have been willing " to release us this very evening, because he found that " we had 'done nothing worthy of bonds.' But as it was " too late to examine myself too, we had to stay over Sunday " in the prison. Oh, what a Sunday was this! Formerly " surrounded by the Lord's people, and united in the praise of " God, now in the company of wicked men whose language " I could not understand! Several times we were robbed, " even by them. Also we had very little rest on our hard " couches. At midnight eight soldiers came to examine " the prison, and every few minutes we were startled by " the sentinel's calls in the yard.

" On Monday, at length, my time to be examined was " come. I was enabled to answer the questions with great " freedom. I proved from the Word of God that our " religion was the very same that had been instituted by " Jesus Christ, taught by His apostles, and sealed with the " blood of martyrs. I appealed to the heart of the judge " whether it be right to persecute a man who thinks it his " duty to obey God rather than man. When the judge " made more particular inquiry respecting our beliefs, I " answered him frankly and fully from the Scriptures. " To conclude, since we were provided with good pass- " ports, in which I was moreover recognised as a Protestant " pastor, no other way was left open by the law but to

" acquit us of all charges. This was done immediately, to " the great joy of our dear friends who had been waiting for " us for six days with two carriages. In these we returned " to A. where, on the next evening, we baptized thirteen " persons, and celebrated the dying love of our Redeemer.

. . . . . .

"The following day we continued our journey home- " wards, and arrived on the 16th. The joy of meeting " again after a month's separation was very great, as our " people had indulged in the most gloomy apprehensions " with reference to my personal safety, and even my life."

This was the type of man of whom the Lord raised up not a few as "chosen vessels unto Him to bear His name" across the border into Russia.

Through much tribulation they have entered the Kingdom; but though they rest from their labours, their works do follow them; and the Russo-Polish evangelical churches of to-day inherit a glorious legacy in the precious records of these valiant heroes of the last half-century, "of whom the world was not worthy."

CHAPTER XI

How Evangelists Invaded the Baltic Provinces

IT is a thrilling story and not without many tragic elements, the story of the penetration by the Gospel message, of the frontier-line lying between north-east Prussia and the Russian province of Courland on the Baltic.

The seaport town of Memel lies away in the remotest corner of north-east Prussia, close to the Russian border. It is a small place of under twenty thousand inhabitants, but there has been a little community of believers in it for very many years. A ship's carpenter, attending the meetings in the days of the Crimean War, became converted and united himself in membership with the Church. Later he returned to Libau, his native town, another seaport, about fifty miles to the north, in Courland. Here he began in an unostentatious way to preach the Gospel in his own dwelling, and among his first converts to the Lord were his father and mother.

Shortly afterwards another young man, a Christian also, removed northwards over the border, in search of employment, and he too settled in Libau; and he was followed by a few others. To these were added the converts made by the testimony of the sailor, and thus a little flock was formed

of witnesses for Christ in this most westerly point of the Tsar's dominions.

To the same neighbourhood migrated a worthy German and his wife, named Brandtmann. This brother was even more bold in his witness for the Lord, and was the means of the conversion of such numbers of the native (Lettish) inhabitants, that the authorities awoke to a sense of the danger of the situation, and Brandtmann was promptly arrested and imprisoned, where he remained for five weary months. This took place in September 1860. But for once, Truth had got the start of the enemy, and although the meetings were publicly prohibited, and other arrests and punishments followed, nothing could stop the tidal wave of religious awakening that advanced northward and eastward through Courland.

At the urgent request of villagers in the interior of the province, two brethren and a sister set out from Libau to visit them, and teach them the Gospel. To their astonishment they discovered on their arrival that there were already hundreds of converts in the place, and such thirst for the Word of God, and such evident power of the Holy Ghost, in the humble cottage meetings, as were indescribable.

The people were very poor. Their houses were built of clay, and the floors were the bare earth, trampled hard by the constant pressure of feet, but very uneven. The interior walls were black with smoke. After dark, their light in the cottages consisted of the flame of small pieces of resinous wood called *pergel*. But the light within burned with wondrous luminousness, and the people were full of the joy of the Lord.

While one of the meetings was in progress, the police appeared at the door of the dwelling.

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed the officer on entering. "You are at it again. We have caught another Prussian at his preaching! Put the irons on them, men!"

At once the police obeyed, and the three visitors from Libau were put in fetters and marched off to the police station. From thence they were conveyed to the prison in the town of Windau where they were closely questioned, their passports examined, and they were detained for several days.

"We shall send you home this time; and mind that you do not fall into our hands again!" said the official who conducted the examination.

Accordingly, the next morning they started from the Windau prison for their long walk of thirty-two miles to Goldingen on the way home. The two men were handcuffed and fastened together by a short chain; and the sister's hands and feet were also in chains. An escort of Russian soldiers, two officers and four privates, accompanied them; to one of whom the men were attached by a length of chain.

There was a great crowd outside the barracks to see the start, and many people bore them company along various stretches of the journey. The sister recited verses of Scripture occasionally as she walked in her clanking fetters; and some of these so moved the hearts of the guards that, after a hurried conference together, they removed her chains, and she was able to walk much more easily. On arrival at their respective homes, the preachers were released, and the soldiers returned to Windau.

In those early years we hear of many devices resorted to by the Christians to hold their meetings for prayer and Bible-study. So strict was the watch kept by the police, that the ordinary cottage meeting was only rarely possible. On one occasion in the darkness of a bitter December night a meeting was arranged in the seclusion of a forest. The authorities, however, having had an intimation of it, surprised the assembly; arrested fifty of them and marched them in the darkness across the snow a distance of twelve miles to the nearest prison. There, the three who had given addresses were detained, and the others were marched back again through the snow, in the misery of the bitterly cold winter night, to the villages to which they belonged. They pleaded that they might be allowed to remain under shelter until the daybreak, but their request was refused.

One young man, an inquirer, on being arrested for attending a meeting, was strapped to the flogging bench in the police office, and cruelly beaten.

"This is for seeking my Saviour lazily," said he. "I will now seek Him with my whole heart, and cling in spirit to His pierced feet on Golgotha, and hold Him fast till death!"

In the Baltic Provinces, the Lutheran Church is practically the State religion, as a considerable proportion of the inhabitants, and all the nobility, owing to their German descent, belong to it. There are also Roman and Greek churches. The Moravians, too, are represented, and, as elsewhere, stand for vital godliness as opposed to formality and sacramentarianism. By the conditions on which they hold their own liberty, however, all these churches, except the Greek, are prohibited from attempting to propagate their faith among the Russians.

A RUSSIAN VILLAGE.

A FOREST HOME.

From Paintings by THEODORE I. YASNOWSKY, of Moscow.
Photo by CHARLES PHILLIPS, F.R.G.S.

For the sufferings they endured, the pioneers of a free Gospel in Courland, and the Baltic Provinces generally, never blamed the Tsar. On the contrary, they strongly believed that if they could but lay before him their story, their case would be humanely and sympathetically considered, and their grievances redressed.

"We have no doubt," said they in a letter to England in 1862, "that these things all transpire against the will of the Emperor; but it is impossible for us to reach his ear."

They made a determined effort, however, personally to plead their cause before Alexander II., and were successful in securing an interview. It is pathetic to hear of their making a collection in all the little communities of believers in Courland, to raise the necessary funds to send two brethren to St. Petersburg as a deputation to the good Tsar. By much self-denial the brethren raised sixty roubles (£6), and the two spokesmen went forth on their important errand.

The Tsar gave his humble subjects a sympathetic audience. Two noblemen were present in attendance upon His Majesty; one of them was plainly more than a friend of the cause they were pleading, for he impulsively interrupted their narration with—

"Indeed! On religious grounds alone, they are actually subjected to flogging and imprisonment!"

There was no immediately apparent result of this happy interview. There was no word of the release of several brethren who lay in prison for the crime of preaching; one brother who had been arrested had altogether disappeared from view, and his relatives, notwithstanding ceaseless

inquiries of the authorities, could glean no tidings of him. There were, however, no further arrests; and the meetings, although held in fear and trembling, were not interfered with, but the police were sometimes present. The "sectarians" were not permitted to remove from one district to another even for a visit. It was understood that the whole question was being considered by the Government in St. Petersburg.

The next Courland evangelical news, a few months later, refers to one of the imprisoned preachers, Brother Gärtner. Surely this hero deserves a place alongside the immortal John Bunyan! The order for his release was sent to the prison of Windau where he had lain in durance vile for many weary months. With alacrity he doffed the disgusting prison clothes, skipped over the hateful prison threshold, and forth into God's free air and sunshine. How delicious to breathe again the sweet breath of liberty!

"Stay a moment," cried the officer at the jail gates. "You are required to give your solemn pledge to me before we finally release you."

"What pledge do you ask from me?" inquired Gärtner.

"Here it is, written. You must put your name to it."

Gärtner took up the document and read. It was an undertaking that he would never again hold any meetings, preach, or administer any religious ordinances.

"I cannot possibly sign this," he exclaimed, the bright flush fading into deathly pallor, upon his cheeks.

"But you must," said the officer firmly.

"I cannot," Gärtner replied. "It is asking of me more than I dare promise. I have a higher Master than even the Tsar, and He has said, 'Go ye, and preach.' I dare not agree to keep silence."

"Then I am afraid you must go back to your cell," said the officer, looking genuinely sorry for his prisoner.

"How is that? Have you not received an order for my release?" panted the preacher, in short feverish gasps.

"Yes, if you will sign this undertaking."

"But I cannot sign it."

"Then I cannot set you free. It never occurred to me that you would refuse to sign."

Gärtner paused a moment to reflect, and to calm his intense agitation. He looked out through the prison gateway, close beside which he stood. The sunbeams were playing with the shadows of the leafy trees across the road. Even the feathered occupants of the branches overhead were revelling in the enjoyment of the unspeakably precious boon of liberty. He turned his gaze to the eyes of the Government official who stood before him with the paper in his hand. The officer flushed hotly, and averted his face. Then looking up to heaven he sighed a prayer to Him who reigns there, and turning round he walked bravely back to the heap of filthy prison clothing upon which he had so eagerly cast his own discarded garments, a few minutes before, and proceeded to remove his own clothes. Freedom could not be bought at such a price!

At length in August 1863, eighteen months after the deputation presented its petition to the Tsar, an "Ukaze of His Imperial Majesty the Autocrat of all the Russias," was sent "From the Directing Senate, to the Upper Court of Tribunal in Courland." This ukaze ordered, with much verbosity and circumlocution, as was befitting the bureaucracy of a great empire, that "the smith of the Labraggen "Estate, Jannsohn, and the tailor, Gärtner of Goldingen,

" . . . cannot be brought to trial on the present charge. . . .
" Hence the Directing Senate orders Jannsohn to be re-
" leased ; and a fine of one rouble silver to be imposed on
" Gärtner. . . ."

The fine was in punishment for "the misdemeanour of Gärtner, in clandestinely crossing the frontier . . . the lowest penalty."

Here is the story of a case of Russian Testaments. How to get them across the frontier and into the hands of those who would read them, was the problem. A Christian brother in Memel happily solved it, by selling one copy to a Russian soldier on frontier duty. The gendarme read the book with interest, showed it to a companion, and he to another. In a short time the case was cleared, and men on duty, up and down the frontier line, were diligently studying the Word of God. The officers were as eager for it as were the men. They clamoured for more; but as the case was empty, they had to be content to borrow a copy from those who fortunately possessed one.

Then a Greek Orthodox priest appeared upon the scene. He caught a soldier absorbed in a book, and examining it, to his horror discovered that it was a New Testament in the common Russian tongue and contraband, printed in England! He went direct to the major, in great wrath.

"If they desire the New Testament in Russian, they ought to come to me; I can supply them," he complained.

That was quite true. But the copies printed by direction of the Holy Synod, of which he was the local representative, would have cost the soldiers about fourteen shillings each, whereas the foreign-printed contraband copies cost them just one shilling each (English money).

The indignation of the cleric was very great when on inquiry the major reported the extensive circulation of the book; and threats of degradation and imprisonment were uttered against the lesser officers who had winked at the offence.

Such incidents as those narrated will give a general idea of the formidable difficulties that beset the progress of Evangelical truth in the Baltic Provinces even in the enlightened reign of Alexander II. But notwithstanding all, the Word of the Lord grew and multiplied; the little one became a thousand, and the small one a strong nation.

CHAPTER XII

The Baptists in Russia

"WITHOUT doubt the Baptist churches have been the nucleus and the backbone of all the recent blessed Evangelical movement in Russia." This is the testimony of a non-Baptist independent witness who speaks with the authority of many years' intimate acquaintance with the facts; and it will be corroborated by all who are in a position to make a statement on the subject.

The German Baptists have, under God, kept burning the light of Gospel truth for many years in that great empire, and particularly in the Baltic Provinces, and Poland, and on the banks of the Dnieper, and the Don.

We have already seen that the religious privileges of the colonists in Southern Russia were secured to them by the covenants under which they came to settle in the country. Their immigration was originally a religious matter with many of them, and they made quite sure before their removal from Germany that they were not escaping from one tyranny, to groan under another. But the Baptists of the Baltic Provinces, and of Poland, and of Western Russia in general, enjoyed no such liberty of conscience. The first were largely converts from Lutheranism. The Poles had forsaken Romanism, or the Greek Uniates. And neither

was tolerated by the law of the land until the year 1879.

Many efforts had been made previously to that year to secure toleration for the Baptist churches, and immunity against fines and cruel imprisonments for their pastors and teachers. For many years these brave and faithful people fought an unequal battle for religious freedom, with a powerful and malignant foe that gave no quarter in the fight. All honour to the memory of these heroic pioneers.

The aid of their friends in Germany and Great Britain was often sought, as intercessors with the authorities on their behalf; and the *Society of Friends* of Great Britain, the *Baptist Union* of Great Britain and Ireland, the *Evangelical Alliance*, and other organisations here and in America, rendered such help as they were able. Of individual helpers, few rendered such valuable and such protracted assistance as the late Pastor J. G. Oncken of Hamburg.

As early as the year 1864, Pastor Oncken undertook a special journey to St. Petersburg with the object of pleading personally with the Tsar on behalf of his distressed co-religionists, chiefly in Western Russia. On the way, he made a halt at the town of Memel on the frontier, mentioned in the previous chapter, to call for the Baptist pastor of that place, Pastor Niemetz, who was to accompany him to the capital. The name of Pastor Niemetz of Memel is that of a great champion in the battle of religious liberty. He died in 1873.

The Russian frontier town of Kovno gave them their first disagreeable experience of Russian official and social life. A swarm of dirty Jewish droshky drivers pestered

them for the privilege of conveying them and their belongings from the steamer to the railway station. When they had engaged two, and had arrived at the station, the fellows coolly informed the travellers that they must drive back to the town to appear in person at the police office for the examination of their passports. There was thus no option but to re-hire their conveyances, and seek the police office.

Arrived there at 4 p.m. they were told that the authorities were enjoying their afternoon siesta.

"Call again at 6 p.m."

At 6 p.m. they again presented themselves. There were three uniformed gentlemen in the room seated round a card-table, playing cards. The two pastors stood waiting, but the officials utterly ignored their presence, and went on with their game as though that was their special business. Presently a fourth official of higher rank appeared upon the scene and snatched up the cards, angrily rebuking his subordinates in voluble and wrathful Russian. The travellers then received attention, and after paying heavily for the examination of their passports, they were allowed to depart.

Of their further journey, and of their five weeks' stay in St. Petersburg, waiting on the pleasure of high dignitaries of State for the privilege of an interview, we need not write, except to mention two important events.

The first was their interview and conversation with the president of the Ministry for the Interior, Count Sievers. This is valuable, as it sets in a clear and authoritative light the fundamental difficulty in the path of religious liberty in Russia. Pastor Oncken has given us a good account of it.

"The reception was frank and open. The Count "requested us to be seated. We had just commenced our "conversation, when the vice-president of the same Ministry "entered and took a seat. Both these noblemen are "members of the Greek Orthodox Church.

"'Gentlemen,' said Count Sievers, 'there is only one "difficulty in the way of your sect being acknowledged. "And that is, you are making proselytes. This is not "allowed in Russia. Everybody can believe here what "they like, and worship God in accordance with their "creed. But proselytising is strictly prohibited.'

"The Count then complained of the secret meetings that "the Baptists were in the habit of holding.

"'Those who join you, can give no reason for doing so,' "he alleged.

"To the charge of holding secret meetings, Brother "Niemetz replied; and I followed by replying to the "charge of proselytising.

"'We do not desire merely to make Baptists,' I said. "'We hold that simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and "in His finished work, saves the soul. We believe that "God has called us to preach this great truth to the "millions throughout Europe. Our primary object is to win "souls for Christ—not to proselytise. Thousands who "have been thus won have not joined our community. "Some have joined us, and have been welcomed by us, "of course.'

"I then proceeded to give a brief sketch of our "missionary labours in other lands. Both gentlemen "listened with apparent interest, and it appeared to me "that more than once the eyes of the Count began to

" moisten. I concluded with a rather bold assertion that " should the Imperial Government attempt to put down by " force the Baptist movement in Russia, they would find it " a severe task, as it was purely a spiritual movement. I " assured the Count that we had the highest veneration for " the Tsar and for his high advisers. But the Bible taught " us to acknowledge no king over our conscience but " Christ.

" The Count on bidding us farewell promised to see us " again on the subject. This was on the 11th November, " and although we were in daily expectation of a message " from him, no message came until the 2nd December. In " that second interview Count Sievers said—

" 'Gentlemen, the best advice I can give you is to " return home. Your further stay in this city can only " injure your cause; while it places us also in an unpleasant " position. All kinds of rumours are afloat about you!'

" He assured us that he entertained friendly feelings " towards us, and was also in favour of religious liberty. " By the latter the Count means that he would be willing " that all sects should be allowed to exist in Russia, but " that none should be permitted to make converts, except, " of course, the Greek Orthodox Church. He then took " leave of us in a very courteous manner."

The second important event in Baptist history arising out of Pastor Oncken's visit to the capital was the administration, for the first time, of the ordinance of baptism as a personal confession of faith, in connection with the Baptist body. This took place on the night of Saturday, 3rd December, or rather early on the Sunday morning, for it was administered just after midnight in order that attention

might not be attracted by it. It was followed by the Lord's Supper, to which a happy company of believers sat down.

On the Monday the two pastors left the Imperial city.

As this Protestant denomination bulks more largely in the Evangelical movement in Russia than any other body of Christians known in Western Europe, it will be best to give at once an outline of their more recent history, for the sake of preserving the unity of this record.

September 21, 1879, fifteen years after the events just recorded, was a great day in the history of the German Baptists in Russia; for on that day was published the Imperial decree (1) permitting and protecting their liberty of worship according to their conscience, and (2) making valid the marriages celebrated by Baptist pastors among the members of their own churches.

In November of that year (1879) the German Baptists of St. Petersburg claimed their liberty under the new law. This, after the observance of many formalities, was granted. On the 23rd, Mr. Kargel, as minister of the St. Petersburg Baptist church, took the oath of fidelity to the Emperor. The ceremony was performed in the city council chamber. It is usual for the person sworn, to have handed to him the crucifix to kiss. Instead of the crucifix, the pulpit Bible of the newly recognised church was laid upon the table.

After the oath of allegiance to the Tsar and Tsarevitch, Mr. Kargel was required to take a further oath to the effect that he "would preach and teach the pure doctrine of the Baptists, and nothing else; and beware of all heresies if such should appear among the Baptists"; and that he "would give notice to the authorities if such heresies appeared."

"Further," said Mr. Kargel, in his interesting account of the proceedings, "I had to promise to strive to live "always, an upright and blameless life; and the oath "concluded as follows. 'In sign whereof I kiss the holy "cross and the holy gospel.' When I said, 'But I have no "cross,' I was told, 'Kiss then the gospel.'

"'Pardon me, your Excellence,' I said, 'but we also object "to kiss the gospel.'

"'Then it will be sufficient without,' was the reply. 'Do "you affirm that you have fully understood all the words of "the oath, and that you truly mean them all?'

"'Yes, truly,' I said; 'not only in the letter, but with all "my heart.'

"I then signed the document, and requested a written "attestation of my office as a minister, which he willingly "gave."

But the old laws against proselytism rendered all evangelistic work by the newly emancipated churches impossible. The Russian-born population must not, under any circumstances, leave the Greek Orthodox Church. Those who had done so risked the severest penalties for defiance of the authorities.

Thus there came about an extraordinary state of affairs. In St. Petersburg, for example, after the promulgation of this ukaze there was regular provision for worship, for German, Danish, Swedish, Lettish, Esthonian, and other Baptists; but no Russian Baptist was even permitted to exist.

However, they *did* exist; but they were painfully familiar with the loathsome interiors of prison kameras, and with the coarse brutality of military escorts in their marches into exile.

The Orthodox authorities in some parts displayed great keenness in scenting out, and dragging to punishment, offenders. The police authorities in Kharkoff, in the year 1895, with the sanction of the Governor, and on the direct suggestion of Archbishop Ambrose, issued a circular in which complaint was made that juries sometimes permitted Stundist prisoners to escape when placed on their trial, on the ground that they were Baptists and not Stundists. It was therefore most important that the police in the future should be particular not to frame the indictment of such persons, so as to lead the court and the jury to suppose that the implicated Stundist had any connection whatever with Baptists. And if a Stundist should plead that he was not a Stundist but a Baptist, the police officials must ignore such representation, and continue to use the word "Stundist" in describing him.

In a Baptist church meeting, at Soroczin on the Volga, where there is now an enrolled membership of upwards of five hundred believers, one of the brethren reported that, instigated by the village popes, some of them had been imprisoned for several days, as they had contrary to prohibition dared to meet together "for edification." In the prison kamera they sang psalms and hymns, and the villagers gathered around in crowds and joined in, much to the annoyance of the popes. The enthusiasm of the stirring German hymn was contagious—

"Ye who bear His sacred name,
Follow Him through flood and flame;
Where our Head has gone before us,
We will tread, His banner o'er us!"

A traveller in the Province of Taurida, just north of the

Crimea, in the year 1899, thus describes the village of Jemosheffka—

"As I approached the steppe, just beyond the last "peasants' dwellings, my attention was attracted by the "village cemetery, where a number of simple wooden "crosses marked the resting-places of the Orthodox. "Going round the cemetery I observed that a spot on "one side was separated from the rest of the ground by a "deep ditch. On this spot there were graves, but no "crosses.

"Returning to my quarters later on in the evening, I "drew my host's attention to the ground in the cemetery "that was separated from the rest.

"'Oh, that is where the Baptists are buried,' replied my "host.

"'Baptists!' I exclaimed. 'Have you any Baptists in "this part of the world?'

"'Yes; there are a great number of them in this village. "The village is three or four miles long; and at the other "end there are thirty houses occupied entirely by Baptists, "while others live here and there, scattered through it.'

"My host in conversation told me that these Baptists "had lived through hard times, being followed up and "hunted out by the police and by zealous emissaries of "the Orthodox Church. They were surprised by the "authorities at their secret prayer-meetings, brought before "the court, fined and threatened. By their repeated fines "many of them had been brought to poverty, and some "had sold their little property and departed for foreign "lands.

"'But the worst is,' observed my informant, 'all that

" does not seem to have done any good, for they only " increase.'

" On entering the village we had noticed a building, " which at a distance gave us the idea of a church. I " learned that it was built by the Baptists as a chapel; but " the authorities had confiscated it, and turned it into a " school for Orthodox children."

In October 1899, the present Tsar added a valuable contribution to the religious liberty that his illustrious grandfather, Tsar Alexander II., had given to the Baptists just twenty years previously.

At that date the *Russian* brethren who had become Baptists were allowed the right to meet together for prayer. But this right was only given to those Russians who *had already left* the fold of Greek Orthodoxy, and had been baptized according to Baptist rites, and were in membership with a Baptist church. No outsiders must attend their meetings; nor must there be any attempt made to make converts to their faith.

Stringent though these conditions were, great numbers of persons found in the ukaze a welcome charter of liberty. They were placed almost upon the same footing as Baptists of the German colonies, or of foreign birth. In Odessa at that date there was a Russian Baptist church of forty members. In Sebastopol a church had been in existence five years; and it was the same in many other centres in the South, and in Poland, and the Baltic Provinces.

On 9th August 1903 an important event took place in St. Petersburg: the first *public* administration of the ordinance of believers' baptism, the administrator being the pastor, Rev. F. Arndt. There were on this occasion,

rejoicings as great, and greater probably, than on the occasion of that historic and wholesale immersion of Russians in the river Dnieper under the direction of Vladimir, the monarch, in 986.

In the previous month the church, the polyglot brotherhood, had removed to new and larger premises, where, to accommodate the different nationalities, arrangements had to be made for five, six, and even seven different services on each Sunday.

The name "Stundist" was still an offence in the nostrils of the tchinovniks. The man who, declining to shelter under the privileged term "Baptist," stood out in the open as a "Stundist" might expect no mercy, if the authorities could but get a grip of him.

In the Province of Kherson, as recently as the year 1903, a number of Russian Baptists had to appear before the court on the charge of being Stundists. In the higher government circles it was believed that the Stundists under cover of religious principles, carried on political and nihilistic propaganda. This was absolutely incorrect; as they learn from the Bible, and practise, the duty of obedience to authorities. Several well-known German Baptist pastors attended at the court as experts, and gave evidence as to the purely religious character of the brethren, and of their meetings. They were opposed by two Greek Orthodox priests who produced the German Confession of Faith, and tried to prove that the accused were not Baptists but "Stundists." The judges were convinced by the arguments of the Baptist pastors, and the brethren were set at liberty.

Before banishment by "administrative order" became

the rule for heretics, a method that saved the authorities considerable trouble, inasmuch as it rendered the tedious and unsatisfactory process of legal trial unnecessary (and the heretic sometimes got the best of it in a legal trial), the conversion of the accused was frequently attempted, when they stood before the judge.

Two brethren were brought into court from a dark cell which they had occupied for several days, waiting the convenience of their accusers. During their incarceration, thieves had been put into their cell. In the night, the brethren could feel their fellow-prisoners' hands about their clothing, searching their pockets for money. They, however, groped in vain; for the police had stolen every kopeck from them shortly after their arrest.

"What is your religion?" inquired the judge, scrutinising the prisoners with keen interest.

"We are Baptists," they replied.

"Baptists—what is that? I do not understand. How many wives have you?"

"We have one wife apiece, for God has so ordained."

"Indeed! And how do you prove that, pray?"

"From the Bible."

"Where does it say so in the Bible?"

"In Genesis ii., and in the New Testament also. 'A bishop must be the husband of one wife.'"

"But you do not presume to consider yourselves bishops?"

"Yes, indeed we are. We have the care of the flock of God. We are pastors in the Baptist Church."

"I want to know about these Baptists. Do you baptize people—anybody?"

"Yes, if they are believers in the Saviour Jesus Christ, and ask us to do so."

"But children only should be baptized; do you actually baptize grown-up people?"

"Certainly, if they are believers."

"Naked?"

"No, never. They are dressed in white garments."

"Where do you get that from?"

"From the Bible which is our only authority on religion."

"But where do you find it in the Bible?"

"In the Gospel of Mark, xvi. 15, 16."

"Do you believe in the Mother of Jesus?"

"We believe she was a holy virgin, whom God from before the foundation of the world ordained to be the mother of our Saviour."

"Do you give worship to the blessed saints?"

"We worship God alone, in the name of Jesus Christ."

"Why do you not give worship to the saints and holy angels?"

"Because it is plainly forbidden in Revelation xix. 10, xxii. 9, and in other Scriptures; but we hold them, and all the children of God in high honour, and would not do them any disrespect."

"I think," said the judge, "that these men had better go home. There is no reason why they should be detained in prison. They appear to be trying to regulate their conduct by the directions of the Bible—that is all!"

The prisoners were then released.

On their return home they found twenty-nine persons waiting to receive baptism at their hands; a great joy after

their recent trials and anxieties, and among the number a brother named G. F. Alf, who afterwards laboured with great blessing as an evangelist, and who many times suffered for his Lord in Russian prisons as we have seen in other chapters.

The German Baptist, and Mennonite churches of St. Petersburg, the Baltic Provinces, and Southern Russia took a vital and heroic part in keeping alight the flame of Evangelical truth, during the dark years of modern Russian history. It will perhaps surprise many to learn that there are at the present time no fewer than 180 organised Baptist churches with pastors in the Russian Empire in Europe.[1] These churches, of course, are widely scattered, for the territory is vast. They are grouped into the Lettonian, Esthonian, Polish, and West, and South Russian Associations. Most of them carry on Sunday-school work, and many of them have local preachers working in the population round about.

In Libau and Riga there are Baptist churches with communicant rolls of 534, 498, 493, and 332 members; two of the churches of West Russia have upwards of 1000 members upon the roll and the South Russian churches have also a very large membership. These churches appear to have increased with considerable rapidity. The pastors were for the most part trained in German colleges particularly in Hamburg. Finland, too, is dotted over with Baptist churches, which are working successfully for the Lord among the population.

One of the pastors in St. Petersburg (Rev. F. Arndt) recently reported that services were held in his meeting-

[1] For complete list see *The Baptist Handbook*, 1909.

house each Lord's day in several languages; first came the German service, then a service in Lettish, then a third for the Finns; afterwards the Swedes gathered for worship, and the Germans again met later in the evening. To these is now added a service in the Russian tongue. Said he, "We should be glad if the Sabbath day had thirty-" six hours, for then we should be able to find time for " three further services which are greatly desired by the " friends who can now have only one service on the Lord's " Day."

The rent of the meeting-house (payable monthly) is a heavy charge on the members. Rent-day comes round so quickly that the pastor wishes that the months had sixty days. Sixty-day months, and thirty-six-hour Sundays would give wider opportunities certainly. And so would more convenient premises; which it is earnestly to be hoped they may possess at an early date.

The Protestant church in Russia with the largest membership is the Baptist church in Lodz, Poland, where two brethren, Pastors F. Brauer and J. Lübeck, have laboured successfully for several years. There is seating room for about 2000 people in the building; and on the communicant roll are upwards of 1500 names. This church, like many of the churches that are smaller numerically, is a blazing centre of light in a land of spiritual night.

In the year 1908 the Baptist churches in Russia were estimated to number about 24,600 adult communicants, besides adherents who are not communicants, respecting whom no statistics are available.

In addition there is the denomination called the

"Mennonite Brethren," which is Baptist with a few added peculiarities, such as the washing of the feet of the brethren in their devotional meetings. They further, resolutely refuse military service. This article of their creed brought them into conflict with the authorities in the earlier years; and great numbers of them left Russia for America in 1874 on the introduction of universal conscription.

The Stundists, of whom there are probably a quarter of a million in South Russia, are practically a Baptist body. Mr. E. H. Broadbent, a "Brother" beloved, who of late years has followed to some extent in the footsteps of Dr. Baedeker, in the visitation of the communities of believers in Eastern Europe, writes of them :—

"Several tendencies show themselves in the meetings " (of the Stundists). One is towards a Baptist organisation " of a simple form; another is on the lines of the assemblies " (Brethren) with which the readers of *Echoes of Service* are " more particularly associated. All take a very definite " position as to the importance of the baptism of believers.

" In Sebastopol there are three meetings; two repre- " senting the two tendencies already mentioned, and one " which is more influenced by Mennonite traditions. " Yesterday (21st January 1907) these three all met together " and broke bread. It was a time of blessing, and true " unity was manifested. For convenience, the three " meetings will go on as before in their separate work and " testimony; but all have gained by this drawing together."

CHAPTER XIII

Anti-Religious Ferments among the Masses

SIDE by side with the awakening interest in spiritual religion, as seen in the upspringing of many sects, the members of each of which displayed extraordinary fervour in the advocacy of its merits, and tenacity in adhering to its principles, frequently even unto death, there arose in Russia a wave of feeling that showed itself in temper and tendencies hostile to obedience to God, and even to belief in the Divine existence. The expression and exhibition of these anti-religious sentiments were almost exclusively confined to the great centres of population—St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and the other considerable cities of the empire.

The roots of the movement are to be discovered, (1) in the growing discontent with their economic conditions, on the part of the factory hands and other bodies of work-people; (2) in the intense excitement created by the tragic events occurring in France as the results of the war with Germany—the rise of the Commune, the downfall of imperialism, and the thunder of the voice of the French people as they seized the reins of government;[1] and (3) in the reading of German socialistic and atheistic literature by

[1] *Underground Russia*, by Stepniak, p. 5.

the young students of the numerous Russian universities, who themselves belonged in the main to the industrial classes. The zealous propaganda undertaken by these enthusiastic but half-informed young men and women, speedily created in the minds of millions of the toilers of Russia a state of bitter antagonism, primarily to the State, and then to the Church, as one of the organs and instruments of the State, in the oppression of the people.

If the Church at this crisis had been independent of the bureaucracy, and had been able to extend a generous and Christly sympathy to the working classes, in their discovery of the intolerable conditions of their lives, how different might have been the attitude of the urban populations of Russia to-day towards all religion, and even towards the holy Person of the Friend of the needy, and the Champion of the oppressed !

As it was, while his wife devoutly crossed herself, and muttered her prayers, and burned her candles before the *ikon* in the corner at home, the town workman went round to the room of his club, where he delivered a harangue to his mates, in which he cursed the Government and the Church, poured out his ignorant scorn upon the Bible—a volume he was utterly unacquainted with—and blasphemed his God.

A sagacious clergyman of the Greek Orthodox Church wrote an important article in the *Moscow Gazette* in the summer of 1895, in which he referred to this movement, and gave Pobiedonostzeff, the head of the Holy Synod, some very wise advice, which, alas, he was not capable of heeding. The writer practically asked the *ober-procureur* which he would prefer, that intelligent and thinking people, when they

broke away from the Greek Orthodox faith, should become Stundists, or should become freethinkers?

Stundism, he pointed out, stood for devoutness of habits, high-toned morality, sobriety, industry, thrift, straightforward honesty in business transactions. He declared that in all the Tsar's dominions there were no more conscientiously law-abiding subjects of the Emperor than the Stundists.

On the other hand, free thought in religion was almost invariably associated with a crude socialistic political creed, frequently violent in its methods, and invariably malignant in its spirit, that caused it to be a grave menace to the empire.

And yet for the freethinker as such, there were no repressive laws; no fines, floggings, banishments. Because, although he thought and said what he pleased, he set up no altar, gave no trouble to the ecclesiastics by adhesion to a rival form of religious worship; while the meek Stundist was made to suffer for his dissent in every possible manner.

Of the two movements, which was calculated to be for the betterment of the State, for the greater security of life and property, for the advancement of human happiness and well-being throughout Russia?

Both these movements have greatly developed since this important article appeared; and history has furnished the answer to these questions with an emphasis that has inspired with horror the civilised world.

The propaganda of socialistic and nihilistic infidelity was always much more aggressive than that of "sectarianism." The dissenter under the burning impulses of his newly found joy in God, and hope in Christ Jesus, was content quietly to call his friends and neighbours together in his *izba* in the

long winter evenings, and say, "Rejoice with me, for I have found that which we had all lost!" He was a peacefully disposed farm labourer usually; constitutionally slow, and peace-loving like the soft-eyed herds that he tended in the fields, and the lumbering oxen that drew his crazy waggon. His wildest fancy never dreamed of red revolution against his *batushka*, the Tsar. The only red that loomed up occasionally before his eyes, was the splashes of his own blood upon the walls of the police house, when—it was indeed possible—they flogged him, for meekly following Jesus. But he was quite prepared to endure that shame, if his Lord's enemies inflicted it upon him.

But the fiery atheist-workman of Moscow was a man of quite another breed. He would stand forth among his mates in the factory yard, and declaim against God and man by the hour, if there were no Cossacks with their dreaded nagaikas in the neighbourhood. He taught his little children to spit at the tchinovniks as they passed along the street. He crept out of his cottage in the darkness of a stormy night to post his revolutionary placards upon doors and walls all over the city, to be read in the grey of the next morning, by the throngs of workmen who in their coarse red shirts hurried along the cobbled streets to their work. The police came later, and scraped off with their swords the inflammatory print; but its mission had been fulfilled.

When, for some overt act of disobedience to the laws of man, the atheist was thrust into the prison-house, he found that the "sectarian" had been arrested some months previously on the charge of obedience to the laws of God, and lay there in weary idleness, vermin-covered, awaiting his trial,

while his wife and little ones—the bread-winner torn from them—sickened and starved at home.

In the prison also, the contrast between the two men was most marked. The atheist uttered his imprecations freely on the slightest provocation; and when not provoked, poured out his soul in lewdness until the kamera became like an abode of devils. The "sectarian" was usually a silent man. He knew too well that to constitute himself censor of the criminals, would be but to exasperate them, and make their violence sevenfold worse. But he let slip no opportunity to give his testimony for Christ.

Pastor G. F. Alf gave the following account of how God used him to the blessing of precious souls in a prison-house. The story is too good to be left untold:—

"The first three days I felt very miserable. I had come
" from a missionary tour in the neighbourhood of Kienning,
" and had exerted myself beyond my strength in the work
" that is to be done there in the kingdom of God. Day
" and night I was surrounded by souls, whom, hungering
" and thirsting for the bread and the water of life, I tried to
" direct in the way of salvation. My chest was sore and
" my throat hoarse with talking. Thus worn out and weary,
" I was taken to the prison. I had at once to exchange my
" own clothes for the grey garments worn by the prisoners.
" Bare boards were my bed. I was received by my fellow-
" prisoners with mocking words and shouts of infernal
" laughter.

" 'Oh, he is not one of our sort, so we shall all know how
" to treat him. Such people as he must be taught manners
" here!' they cried, when they heard the reason of my
" imprisonment.

"There were about seventy prisoners, most of them "thieves. Besides ten Jews, four Germans, and many "Poles, seventeen women were also crouching on the cold "floors of that prison, and a shudder came over me when I "learnt that several of these were murderers. All these "prisoners conspired against me. Some food that I had "intended for my supper, but which in my grief and fatigue "I was not able to eat, was stolen the first night. Soon "after, my necktie was gone. My breakfast consisted of "some boiled water, and one and a half pounds of bread "for the day. For my dinner I got either a little water-"gruel, or a few boiled potatoes without salt. Each day "appeared to me like a month.

"After a week, my wife visited me with two brethren. "They wept when they saw me, and I also could not refrain "from shedding tears. Some food that my wife brought "me, I was allowed to keep, but, alas! how long? By the "next day it had all been stolen from me. I was nigh unto "despair. Three enemies tormented me, Satan, wicked "men, and hunger; and I was also greatly troubled with "vermin.

"In the midst of all these trials, I again took to my "Testament, and put on my armour afresh to combat with "my foes. The evil they had done me, I returned with "services of love, such as sharing my bread with them, "etc. The effect of this was, that my food was "never again touched, and I gradually gained their "love.[1]

[1] "The sectarians in our party of ordinary prisoners always avoided "any participation in the fights, quarrels, and rowdyism of the others; "and tried not to fall out either with the leaders of the convict band,

"'What sort of person can this be?' I overheard them "asking one another.

"One by one all who had offended me came forward and "begged my pardon. My wife sent me some Polish tracts "and a Polish Testament; the tracts I distributed among "the prisoners, and from the Testament I read to them. "Two of the jailers who borrowed the Testament liked it "so much that they would not give it back again, and I "was obliged to see and get some more. I soon succeeded "in getting two other German and Polish ones, which I "gave to my poor fellow-prisoners. The two jailers were "highly delighted to possess such a book, and were very "grateful to me for it. From that time one of them sup- "plied me with necessary food; and I got bread and meat "almost every day, so that I was no more tormented by "hunger.

"I was very often reminded of the ravens who brought "food to Elijah; and of Daniel who even in the lions' den "was strengthened by God. God is still the same now "as ever, and in His abundant mercy watcheth over and "careth for His people. One prisoner from Prussia, who "was chained hand and foot, seemed to be concerned "about his soul's salvation. I gave him a German Testa- "ment. To another man, a watchmaker, I also gave a "Testament.

"I had very serious conversations with the Poles. When "they called upon the Virgin, and all the other saints, I

"on the one hand, nor with the authorities on the other. It was their "custom to accept humbly all insults and injuries inflicted on them as "trials sent them by God."—*Sixteen Years in Siberia*, by Leo Deutsch, p. 176.

" tried to show them from the Word of God that their " prayer would avail them nothing, as neither the holy " mother of the Lord, nor the saints, had the power of " answering them. They were all much astonished to hear " this. When I spoke to them of conversion, they said it " was utterly impossible to be converted in prison; but as " soon as they were set free they would lose no time in " seeking their soul's salvation. Some of them begged me " to swear, 'only once,' so that they might see at least that " I was capable of doing so.

"'It's all very well to lead such a pious life,' said others. "'But who can do it? I could never bear it. I *must* " swear, and lie, and sin.'

"They sometimes secretly played at cards, or smoked, " and even danced; but whenever these culprits were found " out, they were tied face downwards on boards, and " mercilessly beaten with rods.

"Before leaving the prison, I gave a short farewell " address, and asked if I had offended them in any way.

"'No, never! We have often offended you, but you " never hurt us either by word or deed,' they cried.

"I then warned them of the eternal prison awaiting all " who did not repent of their sins, and seek forgiveness in " the blood of Christ. Several of them looked very sad, and " seemed much cast down.

"When I had already left my cell, one of the prisoners, a " man of some education, called me back and told me to " be sure and let him have a Bible. Two of the jailers " made the same request, so that I shall have to send three " Bibles to the Pultusk prison.

"One of the jailers took me, and the brethren who had

" come to meet me, into his house, where we found his wife " had prepared a nice dinner for us."

. . . . . .

In the prison-houses there were often prisoners who were ailing or sick, with whom the preacher might have spiritual conversation, and by whose side he might occasionally pour out his soul in prayer before God. There were occasionally broken-hearted victims of cruel injustice in the kamera companies ; and his own heartache was soothed as he sought to minister tenderly to such, and to do on earth what God will do in heaven, wipe the tears away. He found many clamant calls for the exercise of a quiet ministry for Jesus in that abode of despair, as the tedious days crawled wearily by ; and when the doors were at length opened to him, and he was free again, the Master oftentimes showed him the fruits of his service in the transformed lives of his former prison associates.

If only the religious awakening of the people of Russia had kept pace in its advance, with the progress of infidelity among the working classes of that country, Russia, instead of being a spectacle among the nations, of hopeless unrest and impotent revolutionary frenzy, would have been to-day the foremost people of the earth in the progress of our race towards righteousness, brotherly kindness, happiness, and God.

CHAPTER XIV

"The Red Spectre"

THE bullet that was meant for the Tsar's heart, fired by the hand of Karakasoff in April 1866, frightened the brooding dove of peace, forth out of Russia. From that day until the tragic end in 1881, Alexander II. became, alas, less liberal in his policy. A period of stern reaction set in. Reform was tabooed in the councils of State. The oppressive grip tightened in succession upon the throat of the Baltic Provinces, where the pitiless process of Russification was entered upon with vigour; of the Polish people, where the Uniates (the Greek Christians who still acknowledged allegiance to the Roman ecclesiastical powers) were by stratagem and severity forced to yield submission to the Greek Orthodox Church; and of Russia proper, where the old press censorship was restored, involving the suppression of many papers (some of which the public was doubtless much better without, although the price of their extinction was too heavy, in the denial of press-liberty) and the harassing and penalising of the non-Orthodox.

"On a July night of 1877, while Russian hearts were "wrung by the ignominy of failure before Plevna, fifteen "young men met in a forest near Lipetsk in the Tambov

"Government, and formed a conspiracy, whose watchword "was, war to the knife against all existing institutions "with . . . assassination as a legitimate weapon of offence."[1] This dread organisation was called the Narodnaya Volya (The People's Will). It circulated secretly two organs, one of which bore the name of the Society; the other was called "Black Partition."

Then began that deadly duel between autocracy, or rather bureaucracy, and "red terrorism."[2] First from one part of the empire, and then from another, would flash the news of the assassination of some unhappy member of the administration; from the provincial *ispravnik* or superintendent of police, who had by his severities incurred the wrath of the unseen enemy of Government, to the all-powerful Governor-general of the Province or the City.

The nation trembled, and waited in anxious suspense. Who could tell where next the blow would fall? Who might guess to whom the hidden hand of this impalpable, ubiquitous, implacable foe was pointing?

In April 1879 the Tsar had another escape from death; but the country and the world felt even then, that his doom was sealed. All the formidable battalions of his vast army were powerless to guard his person; all the eyes of his countless spies, scattered plentifully in every grade of the population, could not discover the lurking peril; all the nagaikas of the mounted Cossacks of the Don, the Volga, and the Dnieper—the fearful and familiar whip with which

[1] *The Expansion of Russia*, by F. H. Skrine, p. 265.

[2] "White terrorism"=the plots and menaces of the authorities. "Red terrorism"=the "answer" of the revolutionists. See *Sixteen Years in Siberia*, by Leo Deutsch, p. 10, note.

they are wont to smite and disperse turbulent crowds—could not beat off this menacing terror.

In the forenoon of the fateful 13th of March 1881, Alexander II. attached his signature to a document of the first importance for the liberties of Russia; a programme of far-reaching and vital reforms, which included a National Assembly. In the afternoon of the same day the bombs were thrown, by the waters of the Ekaterinsky Canal, the second of which so cruelly mutilated the monarch. The Nihilists had done their terrible work. And in the doing of it, nay, even in the threat of the deed, they wounded Russian liberty and Russian well-being with a deep and deadly wound. With Alexander the Emancipator, fell the hopes of Russia. Cruelly did the nation pay for that misguided crime.

"No enemy could have struck a greater blow at liberty," said Mr. Carl Joubert, an uncompromising critic of the autocracy, "than these terrorists did when they killed "Alexander II. . . . With all his faults he was the best "ruler that Russia ever had, with the exception of "Alexander I."[1]

They carried his pitifully shattered body from the scene of the outrage, to the Winter Palace, that vast and gorgeous dwelling with its halls and rooms innumerable, and its amazing splendours of art, and of silver and gold. The monarch's eyes were glazing in death as they carried him up the great marble staircase and laid him gently upon the little bed in his own unpretentious little room. There on the writing-table close by, lay the handkerchief and other trifles that he had taken from his pocket before

[1] *The Fall of Tsardom*, by Carl Joubert, p. 175.

leaving home on that fateful morning. They lie there to-day.

In the next apartment—his private council chamber, now crowded by the sobbing members of his family, and high officers of state in their brilliant uniforms—he had signed in 1861 the great decree giving freedom to millions of his subjects; and now in a few short minutes, the strong man from the fulness of his strength, the mighty monarch from his throne, has himself passed into the bondage of death. Reverently cover up his noble face. The enormous burden has at length been taken from his shoulders, and the perpetual terror from his soul. With great pomp, and many manifestations of mourning, they bore his remains to the little island in the frozen Neva, on which stands the church of Peter and Paul; and there they laid him to rest beside the tombs of his ancestors.

In the place where the infernal deed was done they have built a church—the "Cathedral of the Resurrection," it is called.

Herein is preserved unchanged within enclosing railings, that portion of the roadway upon which the murder was committed. There is the kerbstone, with its cobbled gully, upon which Alexander fell when he received his mortal wounds. The imagination of the onlookers leads them to declare that, even yet, the dark stains of the monarch's life-blood can be seen upon the stones. The holy pictures hang above the spot, and the sacred lamps are kept burning there, day and night.

As in an early spring, the sun shining down upon a prosperous orchard laden with white and pink blossoms (the pretty promise of fruitful days to come), is succeeded

by a night of north wind and of frost, which strews the ground beneath the boughs with the frail loveliness, and all the potentiality of autumn plenty, so that one wild act scattered to the winds hopes of beneficent reforms, of larger liberties, of more cordial brotherhood, of an era of splendid progress and prosperity for Russia. The sun had just begun to shine, when the nation was plunged again into the hideous night.

It need not be said that Russian "sectarianism," and in particular Russian Evangelical Nonconformity as embodied in the Molokan and Stundist and similar movements, shared in the universal horror expressed throughout the civilised world at this monstrous crime. Though they had through all their history endured cruel physical sufferings under the repressive hand of the State, they had never thought of a policy of retaliation. Not only was it utterly opposed to their Christian principles, but they had everything to lose and nothing to gain by its adoption. In all their little prayer-meetings, when their hearts had been lifted up to the heavenly throne, they had besought Heaven's favour to smile upon the occupant of the earthly throne, both for the life that now is, and for that which is to come.

The contemporary Baptist records contain ample illustration of the dismay with which the Baptists received the fateful news. One worker in Russia wrote—

"The storm which had been gathering under the iron
" rule of Nicholas, and many of his predecessors, has burst
" over the head of one of the best of the Russian rulers. . . .
" When it was made known to the late Tsar that our fellow-
" believers in the South of Russia were being persecuted
" and exposed to bitter suffering, an Imperial messenger

" was dispatched to Kieff to inquire into the matter, and " thereafter the complaints ceased."

Pastor Ziehl, at that time minister of the church in Cholossna in the Volsk Province, in sending an account of a Memorial Service, said—

" We Baptists have especially experienced the goodwill " of the late Emperor; inasmuch as his laws protected our " work in a manner which calls for the heartiest thanks, " now and for ever, of the Baptists of Russia. I may say " truly that at the Memorial Service there was not a dry " eye amongst us."

In reviewing the reign of Alexander II. it must not be forgotten that the Tsar was particularly fortunate in the high quality and exceptional character of the men who stood around his throne as his advisers and administrative councillors in the earlier years of his reign. It was a time of especial brilliancy of intellect, and of the prevalence of noble ideals in those who occupied the chief seats of the State; and thus the lofty purposes in this great monarch's heart were more easily brought to fruition by reason of the congenial environment of his court and executive.

PART III

THE REIGN OF TSAR ALEXANDER III.

(1881 TO 1894)

THIRTEEN YEARS

Hoarse, horrible, and strong,
Rises to heaven the agonising cry,
Filling the arches of the hollow sky,
"How long, O God, how long?"

WHITTIER.

TSAR ALEXANDER III.

CHAPTER XV

And the Tsar said, "Let there be darkness!"

BEFORE we proceed to set forth the features of his reign as they affected the progress of the Gospel of Christ in Russia, let us make the acquaintance of the new Tsar himself.

In person he was a tall and commanding figure, solidly built, and of herculean strength. His features were regular, and the expression of his large, full-bearded face, pleasing. His forehead was lofty and well-rounded, betokening high ideals, steadfast devotion to duty, and devout sympathies. He looked very handsome in his military uniform, and "every inch" an emperor as he sat upon his splendid throne on great occasions of state. In appearance he was such a *man* as you would be gratified to make a friend of; and such a *monarch* as any nation might be proud to own allegiance to.

There was an unruffled massiveness about the character and habits of Alexander III. that harmonised perfectly with his generous physical proportions. He was never startled. He was never in a hurry. He was not given to talk. He took time to think things out; and his deliberate reflections usually issued in, "Let things remain as they are!" His father's earlier motto was "Advance!" His own policy,

consistently adhered to, through the thirteen sinister years of his rule, was "Tighten your grips!"

"A hush falls upon any gathering all over Russia, at the "mere casual mention of his name. . . . This was a subject "to be left alone. I know of no other country in the world "where this weird awe, at the very sound of a human being's "name, can be duplicated."[1]

We are now delineating the ruler of Russia from the point of view of freedom of conscience in matters of religion. His detestation of war, from which his country suffered so much in the days of his father and grandfather, wins, of course, the approval of all humanitarians. But in other respects, there is every reason to regret his harsh and sternly repressive policy; a policy that has left big stains of human tears and of human blood upon his history, stains that can never be removed; for that which is written, is written, upon the imperishable page of Time.

"Fetters are a necessity in Russia," writes one bitterly. "If a man will not wear them upon his understanding he must submit to them upon his limbs."[2]

For the miseries suffered by the non-Orthodox during the rule of Alexander III. the world is not disposed to cast the blame entirely upon the monarch. Probably to a less extent than was the case with the great majority of his predecessors was this Tsar disposed to be ruled by his advisers. He was not of that temperament and habit of mind. Still, there can be no doubt that if he had chosen to surround himself, in some of the high offices of State, with ministers and advisers of more humane instincts and

[1] *The New Exodus*, by Harold Frederic, p. 134.
[2] *Russia as it really is*, by Carl Joubert, p. 286.

generous views, a different story would have been told to the world than that which historians must now present.[1] The Tsar had in his entourage such men, enlightened, wise, compassionate. If to these had been entrusted the fate of the non-Orthodox—who can tell?

Responsibility for the infamies of the persecution must be shared by such highly placed counsellors of the Tsar as the head of the Holy Synod (of whom, more in the next chapter); the Grand Duke Vladimir, brother to the Tsar, who was "looked upon as the ablest of the Imperial family, a man of great energy, although a terrible despot . . . he was the very fulcrum of the reactionary party";[2] the Ministers of the Interior, General Ignatieff, and Count Tolstoy; Count Delianoff, Minister of Public Education; General Gourko, Governor of Poland; the Grand Duke Serge, Governor of Moscow; Ignatieff's younger brother Alexis, Governor of Kieff; and other provincial governors; also such influential journalists as Katkoff, of the *Moscow Gazette*, Aksakoff, of the *Rousse*, and Suvorin of the St. Petersburg *Novoe Vremya*, who zealously fanned the flames of bigotry and anti-semitism by means of their widely circulating journals.

"We can never hope to learn the one thousandth part

[1] Mr. W. E. Gladstone, in writing to Madame Novikoff upon the death of Alexander III., said: "We in this country much regret that the reign of so excellent a man should have been marked by restrictive measures in religion; but we persuade ourselves, of these he was not personally the author."—*The M.P. for Russia*, by W. T. Stead, vol. ii. p. 433.

[2] *Russia, Political and Social*, by L. Tikhomirof (translated from the French by Edward Aveling, D.Sc.), vol. ii. p. 238.

of this vast and terrible persecution," wrote one who saw much of it.[1]

Making every allowance for evil advisers, it was the Tsar's own hand that wrote, on the margin of an appeal for mercy for the Jews, this sentence: "But we must never forget that "it was the Jews who crucified our Lord, and spilled His "priceless blood."[2]

The remorseless policy of the Russification of composite Russia, adopted by the ministers of Alexander III., the attempt to crush all minds into one mould, and in so doing to crush all holy traditions, all tender memories, all conscience, all individuality out of his non-Orthodox subjects, may be seen at work on the largest scale, among the Lutherans of the Baltic Provinces.

The story cannot here be told in detail, how many thousands of the peasantry (Lutherans) were entrapped into embracing the Orthodox religion,[3] and when they discovered their awful mistake, frantically appealed to the authorities to allow them to return to their true faith, but appealed in vain. One significant sentence from the Tsar's reply to their petition entreating that the right to worship God according to the Protestant manner of their fathers might be restored to them, will reveal the whole position. The reply stated:—

"That His Majesty had read the petition, and had been pleased to order that such request should never be made again."[4]

[1] *The New Exodus*, by Harold Frederic, p. 151.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 173.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 270.
[4] *Borderland of Tsar and Kaiser*, by P. Bigelow, p. 269.

A letter addressed by one of their number, Anne Kursemneeks of Palzmar, to the Tsar, might have moved a heart of adamant.[1] In reply, an abusive official was sent from St. Petersburg, who held a mockery of an inquiry, and sent their Lutheran pastor, Dr. Brandt, into exile. The examination of Anne Kursemneeks contains some noble passages.

"How dare you sign your petition to the Tsar, 'Your most obedient servant,' when you are resisting his order by holding to the Lutheran Church?"

"I am prepared to give up everything for the Tsar," she replied; "even my life——"

Here a ruffianly gendarme interrupted her by shouting, "Your life! Who cares for your life?"

"But," she continued, ignoring the brutal interruption, "my faith I cannot give away. It belongs to God."[2]

If Tsar and peasant could at that moment have exchanged places, the answer would have been the same. The monarch, too, was a man of strong religious emotions. When in St. Petersburg it was his habit to make frequent secret visits to the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul to kneel among the graves of his ancestors and humbly entreat the mercy of God.[3] His minions, however, could show no mercy to those for whom Christ died.

Alexander III. was a man to be pitied. He spent his life in daily dread of the assassin. His father's fate was ever before him. His luxurious palaces were prisons; and from their doors he dared not stir without the most

[1] *Borderland of Tsar and Kaiser*, by P. Bigelow, p. 280.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 282.
[3] See *Due North*, by M. M. Ballou, p. 210.

elaborate precautions. Every stranger who approached might prove to be the avenger—arrived at last! Every meal might possibly have been tampered with by some hidden foe. The falling darkness cast a gloomy shadow of possible ill across his spirit. The day-dawn brought again the load of care and dread beneath the weight of which he in the end staggered prematurely to his grave. His subjects felt as he felt, the haunting presence of death, in the stately avenues of the royal parks, and in the sumptuous salons of the gorgeous palaces. The Tsar died on 1st November 1894, in the fiftieth year of his age, while seated in a chair on the balcony of his palace in Lividia.

CHAPTER XVI

Enter Pobiedonostzeff

LOOK at the face. It is the face of the director of the most stupendous tempest of religious persecution that ever raged upon this planet; the most stupendous, in the vastness of the area affected by it, and in the number of its victims.[1] The ferocious slaughterings of the saints of God under the pagan Roman emperors, under our English Queen Mary, and even the Waldensian and Huguenot massacres, dwindle, beside the "havoc of the Church" wrought by this man, Pobiedonostzeff.

Pobiedonostzeff was a man of mind, a man given to careful reflection, and to the utterance (according to his light) of well-balanced and independent judgments. He was a man of tremendous decision of character. Severely logical, pitilessly resolute, tremendously in earnest, you see in him a man who would have sent his own son to Siberia if need be; or could, if the occasion made it imperative, have sentenced his wife to be treated as certain talkative ladies-in-waiting were treated by order of the Empress Elizabeth.[2]

[1] *Democracy and Liberty*, by W. E. H. Lecky, vol. i. p. 470.

[2] See *The Daughter of Peter the Great, Empress Elizabeth Petrovna*, by R. N. Bain, p. 94.

Such was this statesman Konstantine Pobiedonostzeff, and such was the fashion of the policy that he inflicted upon many of the godly subjects of the Tsar, until his dreadful ascendancy came to an end in 1905. Mr. W. T. Stead said truthfully in 1898, "The procurator of the Holy Synod and his policy represent the most serious difficulty in the way of hearty good feeling between England and Russia."[1]

K. P. Pobiedonostzeff, a professor of Civil Law in the University of Moscow, was installed tutor, first to the Emperor Alexander III. when Tsarevitch, and then in process of time to the present Emperor Nicholas. His personality and abilities made such an impression upon the Tsar Alexander II. that unhappily he was appointed by that monarch, towards the end of his reign, Ober-procurator of the Most Holy Governing Synod, the lay pope of the Russian Church, the one individual in the empire whose will directs the religious life of the entire realm.

For many years Pobiedonostzeff occupied this important position. Now and again he came into the fierce white light of public opinion by a conspicuously audacious defiance of that opinion; but for the most part he was content to shelter behind the throne of his master the Tsar, and pull the official wires[2] that filled the land with sighs and tears, and ruined homes, and broken hearts, and desolated lives.

The priest Gapon, notorious for his calamitous leadership of the St. Petersburg crowd in January 1905, gives a picture of Pobiedonostzeff in his later days, which will help our mental view of him.

[1] *Review of Reviews*, September 1898, p. 300.
[2] *Russian Affairs*, by Geoffrey Drage, p. 17.

"'What do you want?' said a sharp voice suddenly, from behind me.

"I turned round and saw the withered monkey-like face and sharp cold eyes of an old man. It was the great Inquisitor, who had crept noiselessly from behind a door, concealed by a curtain. He was of middle size, of lean figure, slightly bent, and dressed in a black evening-coat."[1]

Time would fail, and space, to tell anything like the full story of the appalling woes inflicted in all directions by this official. Perhaps the worst sufferers were the Jews.[2]

[1] *The Strand Magazine*, August 1905, p. 171.

[2] "The feelings entertained by Alexander III. towards his Jewish "subjects were prompted by the Slavophils Pobiedonostzeff and "Ignatieff. By a series of edicts the Jews of Russia lost nearly every "right attaching to citizenship."—*The Expansion of Russia*, by F. H. Skrine, p. 276. See also *In the Land of the North*, by S. H. Wilkinson, p. 32.

"Between April 1881 and June 1882, 225,000 Jewish families, over "a million souls, fled from Russia."—*The New Exodus*, by Harold Frederic, p. 129.

"Twelve thousand Jews were hunted out of Moscow alone, in the "summer of 1891 . . . with no time for preparation."—*Ibid.* p. 222.

"Not less than a quarter of a million human beings were driven from "their homes and the land of their birth in the year 1892."—*Ibid.* p. 284.

In view of the heart-rending cruelties inflicted upon this abjectly helpless people, what bitter irony there was in Madame Novikoff's attempted justification of the Russian authorities of that day! Said she :—

"If the alien race (*i.e.* the Jews) seems determined to take up a "domineering position, replacing our laws and customs by its own, is "it not our duty to become more determined and energetic than ever, "in our policy of defence?"—*The M.P. for Russia*, by W. T. Stead, p. 286.

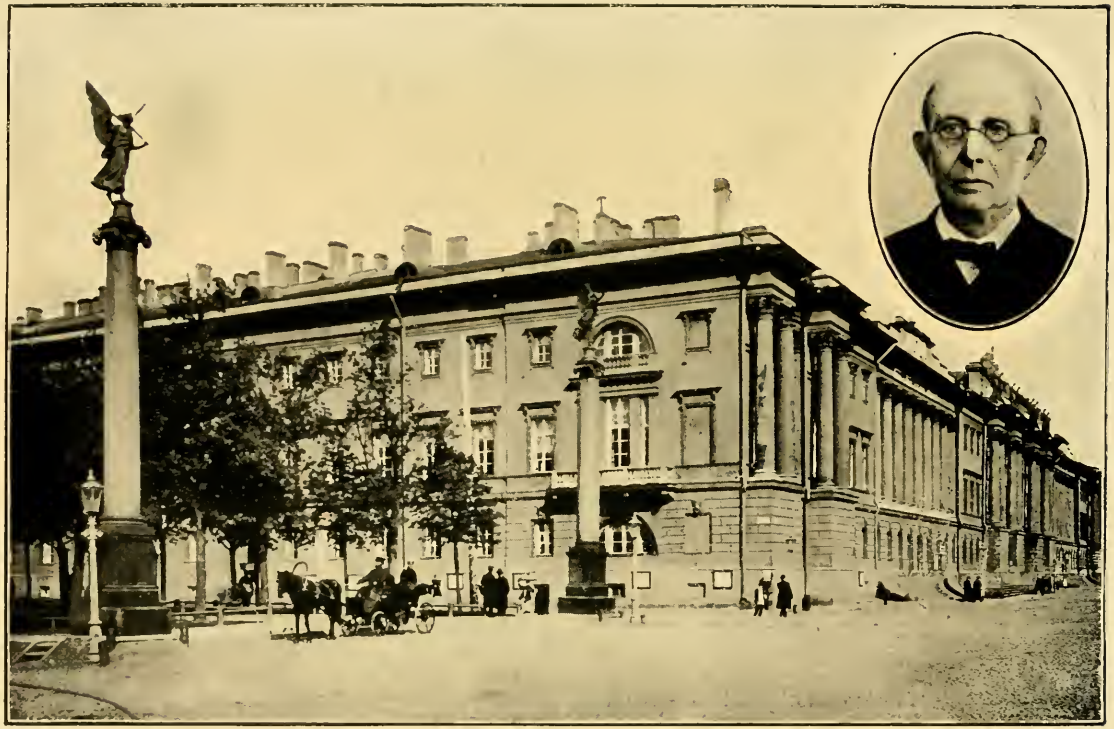
Was there ever such a case of the wolf picking a quarrel with the lamb?

Of course nobody need have been a sufferer if he had been willing and able to abjure his faith, quench his conscience, defy his God, and step over into the Orthodox communion. But there were men and women, vast numbers of them, who would not or could not do these things; therefore the knout fell with a dull thud, and hunger gnawed, and the rats scampered over them in the damp cells, and the vermin swarmed upon them, and their faces and limbs were frost-bitten in the icy blizzards of the North, and their hearts broke with longing for tidings of those who were dearer than life, whose faces they should never see again, and they were hollow-eyed with weeping, and wan with physical torture, and they mercifully died by the wayside in the deep forest, in the loathsome kamera hospital, and the Avenger of His saints received their souls into His eternal glory, with the immortal benediction, "Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the Kingdom!"

"And I saw. . . the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood? . . . And white robes were given unto every one of them."

This non-mitred Hildebrand and non-purpled Nero, is inextricably involved in the history of the religious life of Russia, for the period of about twenty-five years.

It may be helpful if a brief explanation of the position of the Holy Synod itself is here given. In the year 1720 Peter the Great, to whom modern Russia owes not only its capital, but much besides, instituted for the government of the Greek Orthodox Church of Russia a Holy Legislative Synod. The members of this body have always been



K. P. POBIEDONOSTZEFF, AND THE
HOLY SYNOD, ST. PETERSBURG.

selected by the Tsar personally from among the higher clergy of the Church. But in order the better to secure his personal control, Peter enacted that the head of this body should not be an ecclesiastic, but a layman, to be also appointed by the Tsar, and empowered in his name to veto all its decisions unless approved personally by the monarch. The Ober-procurator is therefore the "minister of the crown for the department of religion." [1]

We can thus see how important was the position that Pobiedonostzeff was called to fill, and what enormous powers for good or for evil were given to him to wield. Not only to the non-Orthodox was he a terror, but even the humblest village pope had good reason to tremble, if the vulture-scent of the Ober-procurator sniffed the faintest odour of heretical suspicion in connection with his name.[2] He shepherded the Russian flock with a whip, compared with which the "nagaika" of the Cossack, and the "knout," and the "plet" of the Siberian prisons were as infants' toys.

Pobiedonostzeff was something of an orator in a quiet and impressive way. He had a polished and effective style which gave weight to his speeches. Those who have heard him, speak appreciatively of his performances. He was also a literary man, and has given the world some of his ideas in permanent form.[3] They are an interesting study. As one reads, one hardly knows whether to laugh or to weep; to laugh, at a philosophy as utterly out of

[1] See *Mosheim*, notes by Dr. Murdock, Dr. J. S. Reid's edition, p. 782.

[2] See Appendix B.

[3] *Reflections of a Russian Statesman*, translated into English in 1898. See *Review of Reviews*, September 1898.

harmony with the modern world as are the wild vagaries of some of the extreme Russian "Sectarians" out of harmony with the primary articles of the Christian faith; or to weep, that such views should be held by a statesman responsible for the happiness and well-being of millions of human beings.

His immediate predecessor in the chair of the Holy Synod, who held that office for about fifteen years, was Count Dmitry Tolstoy, a cousin of the novelist, and an avowed atheist.[1] Religion had indeed been dragged down to the depths when the chief authority in the Church was vested in a man who boldly avowed himself an unbeliever. The change was, however, much for the worse when Pobiedonostzeff succeeded him.

It has been said that no tyrant is so remorselessly tyrannical as the religious fanatic. The Ober-procurator was pre-eminently a "religious" man. He might be seen almost any day when in residence in the Winter Palace, wandering around the Imperial private gardens, with a prayer-book in his hands, mumbling his devotions.

"During the great part of the year, he retires to the "Sergieff monastery, and mortifies the flesh as vigorously "as any anchorite, remaining for days upon his knees, fasting, "and beating his forehead against the stone floor."[2]

It might have been said to him, as the monk Nicholas said to Ivan the Terrible when he was contemplating the massacre of the people of Pskoff. Ivan visited Nicholas in his cell. The monk offered him a piece of raw meat.

[1] *The National Review*, May 1905, p. 525.
[2] *The New Exodus*, by Harold Frederic, p. 148.

"I am a good Christian," said Ivan; "and eat no meat during Lent."

"Thou doest worse," answered Nicholas; "for thou feastest upon the flesh and blood of Christians!" [1] Like Saul of Tarsus, he had a zeal for God, that was not to him at all inconsistent with "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against His servants. He sincerely imagined he was "doing God service."

"You believe in a Christ of weakness and of sentiment; but I believe in a Christ of authority and power," said he in a letter to Count Leo Tolstoy.[2]

A man of blameless moral character, and of surpassing abilities, he might have rendered his country inestimable service and have won imperishable renown had he been as an administrator other than he was.

There is a striking sentence in Pobiedonostzeff's *Reflections* that well deserves quotation. His profound dislike of the Church of England, moves him to such a degree that he is almost tempted to take up the cudgels on behalf of English Nonconformity. As an apologist for dissent in a foreign country, he is amazingly blind to the application of his utterance to the non-Orthodox in his own land.

"We must not wonder that the conscience of the people "is not satisfied with the constitution of the Church, and "that England . . . has become . . . the country of dissidence. "The need of religion and the need of prayer in the mass "of the people, finding no satisfaction in the Established

[1] *Russia Past and Present* (trans. from the German), by H. M. Chester, p. 153.

[2] *The Truth about Russia*, by W. T. Stead, p. 443.

"Church, seeks issue in free and independent congrega-
"tions."

Here is another significant extract from this spiritual dictator's published opinions. It is from a letter dated 5th February 1893, which was written to an English correspondent to repudiate the suggestion that he would favour a union between the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches.

"The liberty of our Church is more precious than "anything in the world. Our faith is not compatible "with the discretionary power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. "All other differences are not important—symbols, rites, "etc.—but this will always be an insurmountable obstacle "to the reunion in which we would have to renounce our "spiritual liberty."

If a member of a Molokan or a Baptist church had ventured to put his plea to Pobiedonostzeff in these same words, Pobiedonostzeff would most probably have had him knouted, and marched off to Transcaspia or Transbaikalia! Pobiedonostzeff was a stiff defender of the rights and liberties of conscience—for himself!

The arbitrary and reactionary authority of this man was at length brought to a close in the autumn of the year 1905, when in the social unrest and political excitements with which those days were crowded, he asked the Tsar's permission to retire from his post. The world drew a long breath of satisfaction.

In March 1906 Konstantine Pobiedonostzeff died.

CHAPTER XVII

"As Sheep in the Midst of Wolves"

IN order to have an appreciation of the intolerable conditions under which the Russian "Sectarians" lived their lives, even when outside of the prisons, it is necessary that we should know something of the police system of the empire. In no country in the world is a police-officer, however estimable a man he may be personally, by virtue of his office, the petty tyrant that he is in Russia. Such a state of things would raise a rebellion in any nation under heaven. From the humble uriadnik or village constable, up to the proudest provincial tchinovnik who promenades in his amiable self-importance along the fashionable boulevard of one of the great cities, the Russian police are a quite impossible set of men.

"It is not the Tsar of whom we complain," said a shrewd Russian, on one occasion. "It is of the quarter of a million Tsarlets, scattered all over Russia, who by their brutality and their rapacity and their depravity, make life a burden to the civilian throughout the Tsar's dominions."

"Where is the law of the land?" inquires another writer;[1] and he replies, "The law of Russia is on paper, " beautifully printed in many books. In practice the law is " that of Haroun-al-Rashid giving judgment in the gate

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, June 1905, p. 1015, by V. E. Marsden.

" according to the whim of the hour. And the Haroun-al-" Rashids in Russia are far too numerous."

"At the wharves of Baku, I, for the first time in my life," writes an American traveller, "saw smart uniformed policemen strike people smashing blows in the face with clenched fist, and kick them most brutally, to move them on."

"The harshest feature of the many harsh sides of life in Russia is the utter absence of constitutional rights. Individuals have no rights. They exist in peace, and breathe the air outside a prison, solely on the sufferance of the police, whose authority over them is practically that of deputy despots in their capacity of representatives of the Tsar."[1]

The result is that the people—particularly the peasantry—live in the perpetual dread of these officers of the law. They are practically the only men of independence, the only men who can fearlessly lift up their heads in the country, and this, only so long as there is no superior tchinovnik within sight or hearing. A prominent Russian journalist has said: "The very bears are capable of being moved to pity, but the tchinovnik knows no ruth."[2] It has passed into a proverb, that there are three gods worshipped by the people of Russia—tshai (tea), shtshee (cabbage soup), and tchin (official rank).

"A police tchin is a man of action. He uses not the pen, but the fist, the rod, and the stick. He breaks teeth and flogs backs."

The *ispravniks* (or police superintendents) are in possession of extraordinarily despotic powers over the population. They impose fines, imprison, flog, as a matter of course any

[1] *Through Russia on a Mustang*, Preface, by T. Stevens.
[2] *Studies in Russia*, by A. J. C. Hare, p. 197.

person who in their judgment deserves such punishment, without compunction or restraint.[1]

The powers and authority of the police are greatly increased by the number of other offices they fulfil besides the alleged preservation of order. Even the village uriadnik is also the parish sanitary inspector, inspector of roads and bridges, agent for the collection of statistics, etc. They poke their nose into everything, prying into private dwellings to see that the moujiks keep them properly ventilated, etc.[2]

It is easy to see how such a system places the population absolutely at the mercy of officialism; and if the official be an unscrupulous scamp, as was not infrequently the case when Alexander III. was on the throne, the country was the victim of a swarm of blackmailers and abusive tyrants, who made life a terror.

Bad as was the fate of the ordinary Orthodox peasant, his position was comfortable, in comparison with that of the man against whom the fiat of Pobiedonostzeff had gone forth. The system of secret "ministerial circulars," instructing the local officials how to interpret Imperial decrees,[3] was used as an effective instrument against non-Orthodoxy. The unhappy heretic thus became the prey of all the harpies of his district so long as he had any possessions left to prey upon.

A policeman comes to the house of a Stundist, and looking round, asks—

"Where is your picture?"

[1] *The Russian Peasantry*, by Stepniak, p. 166. See also *Russia, Political and Social*, by L. Tikhomirof, vol. ii. p. 136 et seq.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 212.

[3] *Greater Russia*, by Wirt Gerrare, p. 21.

Every Orthodox Russian has in the corner of his room a holy picture, before which, as often as he can afford it, he burns the intercessory candle.

"I have no such thing," replies the moujik bravely.

"If you have none by to-morrow, you will see what will happen!" cries the policeman, with a significant nod of the head.

Next day he comes again, and if he finds no *ikon* the man is arrested and sent to prison, and his wife and family are left to do as best they can without the bread-winner.

The payment of regular blackmail to the uriadnik would almost invariably secure relief in such a case as this, unless the village pope interfered to champion the Orthodox faith or to share the spoil.

"It is only when the Nonconformists have rendered to the police the things craved for by the police," says Dr. Dillon, "that they can begin to render unto God the things that are God's; and not always even then!"[1]

Again, every Russian subject belonging by birth to the Orthodox Church must be possessed of a certificate, to be renewed annually, that he has partaken of the sacrament in the course of the year. This eucharistic certificate is said to be—in districts where heresy prevails—a source of more than half the income of the local popes. By a species of blackmail he protects the dissenter from the fangs of the police, through the false certificate which he readily issues, and at the same time adds a little to his scanty purse. If from any cause the heretic has incurred the displeasure of the village pope, the latter has only to withhold the certificate,

[1] *The National Review*, May 1905, p. 528.

TROUBLE.

From the Painting by N. B. ORLOFF in the Tretiakoff Gallery, Moscow.

and the unhappy man is taken in hand by the police without ceremony.

There was a wanton brutality in the well-known domiciliary visits of the police to the houses of dissenters.

These visits were usually planned for midnight. The inmates of the house would be awakened by the thundering impatient blows of the police upon the door. When admitted, no consideration whatever was shown to age, sex, or sickness. Everybody must come forth for careful and often insulting personal search. They were then probably turned out of the house, while the dwelling itself was thoroughly overhauled. It mattered not if it were raining outside, or a bitter frost, all must obey the orders, and wait the pleasure of the *pristav* or police sergeant in charge. If money or any article of value—should the household happen to possess such a thing—were carried away, with all papers, etc., and were removed to the police station, there was no recovery, and it need hardly be said, no redress.

The domiciliary visit was a common experience of Christian families during the black years of the reaction. Of course it could be, and often was, bought off by paying blackmail to the authorities. But there was a limit to the financial resources even of people who loved and served God. The *pristav* would look you in the face with astonishment and reproach, if you were to expostulate with him on his dishonesty and harshness.

"What am I to do for my living?" he would ask you. "My salary amounts to seventy roubles a month (£7), and out of that I have to find and keep a horse to carry me over my wide district. I am bound to find a few perquisites somewhere; and these law-breakers are my perquisites."

Owing to their superior industry and thrift, and to their temperate habits, and the awakening of their intellectual powers, the Stundists were able by diligence and toil to improve their position and to reach a higher level than their Orthodox neighbours. Like the non-Russian races outside the Greek Orthodox Church, these Russians themselves developed economically after they had seized their spiritual liberty. Thus they attracted the envious eyes of the multitude of predatory officials around them, who, supported always by their superiors, seized upon every pretext to levy their blackmail, or with unsparing violence extort their plunder.

The Molokan merchant, the Stundist farmer or peasant, the Jew, the Armenian, lived their life and carried on their trade, whatever it was, under a system of oppressive laws, administered in the most savage manner by an enormous swarm of brutal harpies, appallingly corrupt and extortionate in every rank.

As an example of the fines imposed, in a single village in eleven months, twelve families were fined 2600 roubles (about £260). If the fines were not paid their goods were seized; and if these did not realise sufficient, the accused were imprisoned.

"Among the causes of the great persecutions of Polish Catholics, of Lutherans, of Russian dissenters, and above all, of Jews," says Mr. Lecky, "much has been ascribed, by the best observers, to the mere greed of corrupt officials seeking for blackmail and for confiscations."[1]

The Russian satirist, Shchedrin, used to say, "If you

[1] *Democracy and Liberty*, by W. E. H. Lecky, vol. ii. p. 471.

want to talk to a tchinovnik, talk to him in roubles; he will understand that."[1]

When the Holy Synod forbade the meetings of the "Sectarians" in the towns and villages, the moujiks sought out secluded valleys, and appointed rendezvous in the depths of the forests, braving the terrors of dark winter nights and deep snows, that they might meet like David and Jonathan to strengthen each other's hands in God.

An *Address* presented by the Orthodox clergy of Kieff to Count Ignatieff, the Governor-general of the province, the Tsar's representative over a population of ten million persons, showed plainly the iron hand (with no hypocrisy of a velvet glove) with which that tyrant attempted to crush "heresy." The *Address* thanked the Governor-general for forbidding the meetings of the heretics for prayer; for forbidding the colportage of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and for making it illegal for Stundists to enter artisan guilds, or to acquire land by purchase.

The "Sectarians" often were not allowed even domestic rights. Their wives were branded as unchaste. Their children were taken from their control, to be brought up in the Orthodox religion. Dr. E. J. Dillon has pointed out that in these matters "the religious status of the Old Believers, and of dissenters from Orthodoxy in general . . . is very much worse than that of the Kalmucks, the Tartars, the Kirghises, and the run of northern semi-savages."[2]

"And others had trial of cruel mockings." In a village in the district of Uman the Stundists were marched to

[1] *Impressions of Russia*, by Dr. Georg Brandes (trans. from the Danish, by S. C. Eastman), p. 148.

[2] *National Review*, May 1905, p. 530.

the nearest town and kept in prison—without trial—for fifteen days. They were then brought out to "make sport" for their foes. They were cuffed and buffeted in the rough horse-play of the police, who then shaved their heads and released them. Such treatment was only too common, and was merciful in comparison with the behaviour of the officials in other places. In the month of January in the winter of 1891, when the frost was 20 degrees below zero, a number of Stundists were drenched with cold water at intervals for an hour. It afforded great amusement for the tchinovniks, but some of the victims died, in consequence.

When it was found by the Most Holy Governing Synod that the public trial of "Sectarians" drew increased public attention to their doctrines, and excited hostility against the Greek Orthodox Church as the originator of the persecutions, the method was invented of "exile by administrative order." Authority was freely given to representatives of the Government in the various localities to pass sentence of exile—with all the accompanying privations and horrors—without even the pretence of a trial, upon all persons suspected of attempting to propagate heresy, or otherwise offending against the Russian Church. Under this system of "exile by administrative order" many thousands of believers suffered cruelly, without a hearing, and without the slightest possibility of redress. No man could be sure it would not be his turn next, to be seized and transported to Siberia, or the White Sea, or Transcaucasia.

The scenes at the police offices, particularly in the villages and towns in some of the South Russian provinces, were often of the most sickening and tragic character. It is no wonder that the population regarded the Office as a

veritable shambles; although even in this matter the phlegmatic temperament of the people caused them to view with indifference, scenes that would chill us to the heart with horror.

The flogging of those who offended against the Ecclesiastical laws, was generally carried out at these police offices. The victim, man or woman, youth or girl, was commanded to strip, and lie prostrate upon a long board, face downwards. He or she was then secured by the strapping of the limbs, and a muscular uriadnik proceeded to inflict the terrible blows upon the naked flesh, regardless of the shrieking appeals for mercy from the writhing victim. The screams, presently subdued to groans, often ceased entirely—the victim had fainted. Then the punishment ceased until consciousness was restored, when it was resumed and completed. The prisoner was then handed over to relatives, who carried the limp and mangled body over the snows to the humble home. Behind the forbidding walls, in the dark cells of police offices, and prison fortresses, indignities and enormities of unspeakable horror were often perpetrated upon these faithful sufferers for Christ's sake, by the representatives of religion and law. In many cases the victims were mercifully released from their tormentors by death.

The famous Russian writer, Dostoïeffsky, himself a victim, has given us a faithful picture of the brutalising effect of his duties upon the Russian police official:—

"Those who have possessed unlimited power over the "flesh, blood, and soul of their fellow-creatures . . . be- "come incapable of resisting their desires, and their thirst "for sensations. Tyranny . . . at last becomes a disease. "I declare that the best man in the world can become

" hardened and brutified to such a point that nothing will " distinguish him from a wild beast. Blood and power " intoxicate. They aid the development of callousness and " debauchery. The mind becomes capable of the most " abnormal cruelty in the form of pleasure. The man " disappears for ever in the tyrant.[1]

"Our life (in the prison) was a constant hell, a per- " petual damnation."[2]

Who, in the light of these revelations, can estimate the magnificent heroism of that humble peasant, who in reply to the threatenings of the accusing officials before whom he was being tried, said—

" Mr. Judge, we do not value our bodies. The only thing of importance to us is, that our consciences should be clear."[3]

"There is scarcely a prison in South Russia," said a reliable observer in a report of this period, "that does not contain Stundists; there is scarcely a convoy of convicts on the way to Siberia which has not in its midst a Stundist preacher. It is no longer a matter of mere persecution; it is a determination to extinguish them."

The Stundist when arrested was treated in every respect like an ordinary criminal or outlaw. He wore the vermin-infested convict garments that others had worn before him. His head was half-shaved. The nights were passed in the abominably filthy étapes, where he was crowded in with the offscouring of Russia's criminal and vicious population. He was compelled to hear their loathsome

[1] *Recollections of the House of the Dead*, by Feodor Dostoïeffsky (translated by H. Sutherland Edwards), p. 229.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 13.

[3] *A Peculiar People*, by Aylmer Maude, p. 30.

and blasphemous talk, and to bear patiently the indescribable brutality of the gaolers. During the long exhausting marches, he carried his bundles and packages, and the soldiers urged him forward with blows and curses. As to the poor women who were courageous enough to faithfully follow their exiled husbands, the calamities that ordinarily befell them, were tragedies such as blanch the faces and clench the teeth of strong men, in wrath and horror.[1] It has only been since the birth of the little Tsarevitch on 12th August 1904, that the hideous practice of flogging has been discontinued in Russia, for civil and, I suppose, ecclesiastical offences.

It is glorious to find that the merciless treatment of God-fearing dissenters did not break their spirit, nor quench the light kindled within them by the Holy Ghost. We experience a thrill of pride in these brave disciples, as we hear of them tramping through freezing mud in the direction of Siberia along the endless miles of the convicts' road. The boots supplied to them by corrupt officials were worn out after the first few days upon the road. Their feet had no protection against the slush, and stones, and dreadful frosts.

But while enduring all the miseries of their lot, they were strangely sustained by the Divine presence and grace. In many instances even the soldiers that formed their escort were moved by their fortitude and fervour, and came themselves under the saving power of the Gospel; while their fellow-prisoners, criminals of every kind and colour, were subdued at first by sympathy with their undeserved sufferings, and, on more intimate acquaintance with them, by a desire to learn more of Him who is able to save even to the uttermost.

[1] See p. 190.

CHAPTER XVIII

With the Exiles

The great city is that which has the greatest man or woman.
If it be a few ragged huts, it is still the greatest city in the world.

THUS wrote Walt Whitman in his *Song of the Broad Axe.* Then we must look for the greatest cities in the world on the frozen shores of the White Sea; among the sandy deserts of Trans-Caspania in the Asian border; or amid the solitary rocky heights of the Persian frontier in Transcaucasia; for in these weary desolations some of the sublimest specimens of the human race have lived many years of their heroic and saintly lives.

There are two mountainous regions in Southern Russia. What a contrast they present! They are separated from each other by the Straits of Kertch that run between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. Embowered in the loveliness of the *western mountains* in the Crimea, is the Tsar's palace of Lividia. In the sterility of the *eastern mountains* in the Caucasus were the huts and caves of the exiles.

About the palaces of the Tsar and of the wealthy Russian nobles in the southern Crimea, flourish fragrant woods, and extensive rose gardens, in which all varieties of choice roses are carefully cultivated by expert and well-paid gardeners; and vineyards that produce the most delicious

grapes. Everything abounds there that can please the eye, or tempt the palate, or gratify the taste for the beautiful—and the costly. On the brilliant blue waters of the misnamed Black Sea (although it can be black enough in its stormy moods) there rides easily at anchor, the graceful Imperial yacht, waiting His Majesty's pleasure.

But now turn Eastwards. The scenes around the damp caves and mud huts in which dwell the men and women exiled for Christ's sake to the fastnesses of desolate Caucasia, and the manner of their life, we are about to describe.

There are *women* in the dreary settlement; for in some cases the wives of the Stundists have followed them into their exile, bringing the children with them; and together they wage a stern and terrible fight with starvation. The effort to wrest a living from stony soil of the poorest quality, with practically no proper implements of husbandry, and in a climate Arctic in its severity, is a terrible experience. It is one long thrusting back of pertinacious hunger and despair. There have been very many graves dug amid these lonely mountains, for little children, and hollow-eyed wives, and brave men since the year 1881.

The exiles can spare you an hour or two in the long winter nights to tell you their heart-breaking stories. They are glad to see a visitor; for the days—alas! the years—pass very slowly. They pine to see a kindly look on a human face. They have seen it so seldom—perhaps not at all since Dr. Baedeker's visit, three or four years ago.[1] Oh, how they clung around that compassionate man's neck and mingled their tears with his when he brought them his message of brotherly comfort and help. Since then even their little

[1] See *Dr. Baedeker, and his Apostolic Work in Russia*, chap. xv.

prayer-meetings have been forbidden, and they have the greatest difficulty in arranging to "break the bread" together in remembrance of the Lord's death, so as to avoid attracting the attention of the lynx-eyed *pristav*.

There are about thirty exiled families scattered over the district of Gerussi on the Persian frontier, nearly all Baptists. The few inhabitants of the region are Tartars; for the most part wild, predatory, and not infrequently cruel in their conduct. There is no possibility of communication with them, as none of the exiles can speak their language. These Tartars live in the mountain caves, with their cattle, and are of repulsively dirty habits.

To reach Gerussi you travel by a little-used track over the mountains from Schuscha, which is about a hundred miles distant. The journey is exciting, as it abounds in perilous passes and gloomy ravines and gorges in which occasionally lurk outlaws, who know no authority, human or Divine. The track ends at the Gerussi settlement; the savage mountains beyond are left utterly to the wild beasts.

The first work of the exile is to scrape a hole in the ground, in which to shelter. There are no dwellings provided by the Government. He must find a cave, or dig a hole like a wild animal. Then he must find food. The Russian law entitles them to the generous allowance of 7s. per month. But the executive—overriding the law—denies them even this. Nor may they seek employment beyond the boundaries of the village, if indeed any were to be found. If they would only quietly die it would be a relief to the authorities. How they contrive to escape death is amazing. Of course the older exiles help the newcomer. They buckle

their waist-belt tighter to ease their hunger, in order to share with him their scanty meals of black bread.

In 1892 an enterprising Stundist named Babienko planted a few water-melons in his little garden plot, and watched their growth with intense eagerness. When the fruit appeared, he tended the vines with the affection of a mother for her infant. The hot summer sun swelled their bulk, and painted, and almost ripened them.

One morning at dawn, Babienko came out of his hut to feast his eyes on his ripening melons; he had been thinking in the night how rich he would be when they were ready to be turned into roubles. They were almost ready. The sight that met his eyes dazed him. He could not believe that he was awake. What he saw was, not a comely melon patch, with fruit ready for the gathering, but a tangled ruin of trampled and broken vines. The fruit had disappeared, and the vines were laid waste.

The poor fellow fell upon the ground and sobbed and cried. Who had done this dastardly wrong to him? Who had snatched from his children's lips their winter's food, so hardly earned? It was the three village policemen. Such a heretical proceeding as melon-growing must be stopped by the strong arm of the law. They had taken 120 melons, and destroyed the remainder as they grew. Babienko dared not make complaint.

His neighbour Kornei, another Stundist, had been able to bring with him to Gerussi, a mule, which he had found most useful on his little plot of land. Kornei had planted cabbages, and they were doing well. These ruthless police, to whose tender mercies the exiles were committed, must needs destroy this homely harvest in sheer wantonness and

malice; and added on the same night the further atrocity of chopping off the hind feet of the mule!

In this hut lives Brother Isdanoff, with his young wife and two darling children. This man was a mounted policeman a few years ago, and a noble figure he made as he sat upon his horse, clattering along the cobbled streets of Moscow.

But thoughts of God, and the world to come, entered into his mind, among the incessant crowd of mundane reflections. As the days passed, his awakening and anxiety of soul increased. He was able to read, so he bought a New Testament and diligently read it.

Kieff, the ancient city of Vladimir, sitting in stateliness upon the hills that overlook the Dnieper, is the Mecca of the Russian pilgrims. To travel thither and to worship in its historic fanes, and before its venerable shrines, is the ambition of many thousands of devout moujiks. Isdanoff decided to leave the police force, become a pilgrim, and journey to Kieff. He might there be received into a monastery and devote his life to the practices of devotion in seclusion.

He doffed his uniform, donned the appropriate pilgrim's rags, and taking his New Testament with him, he started forth for Kieff. On the way, in passing through a village in Little Russia, he fell in with some Stundist peasants. Their interest in him was intense, when they discovered that he possessed a New Testament. From them he learned the truth of the Gospel, and became, by faith, a new creature in Christ Jesus. He began to work for his newly found Lord and Master; but alas! his opportunity for service was short. He was arrested for attempting to induce persons to give up the Orthodox

Church, and after a very brief trial was sentenced by the Court to "loss of all civil rights," and to "eternal banishment to Transcaucasia." "The loss of all civil rights," means that nobody may give you work, or bread, and that everybody is at liberty to rob, abuse, or maltreat you to the extent of their inclination, or even to kill you.

In the local prison, the hair of half his head was shaved off, as is the case with all convicted criminals, and iron chains were forged around his ankles. He was then sent off over the Caucasian mountains, or rather to Vladikawkas, a town on the northern slope of the range. From here he had to walk in a criminal gang, under military escort, the two hundred miles to Tiflis, over the rough mountainous roads, his chains clanking at every step he took. Such a pilgrimage he had not dreamed of, when he left the police force to tramp to Kieff to seek peace of soul and God's salvation. But he now possessed both; and tramped joyously along, for was he not counted "worthy to suffer for His sake"?

After a few years, Isdanoff was allowed a measure of liberty, although not permitted to leave the Caucasus. He sent for his loyal sweetheart, who had in his absence herself found Christ. They were married; and he opened a little greengrocer's shop in Elizabetpol. Every kopeck he could spare, he faithfully devoted to the relief of the miseries of his brethren in exile, in the lonely districts of which Elizabetpol is the centre. He felt that the Lord had sent him there to help these beloved disciples and their helpless wives and little ones. For upwards of ten years Isdanoff carried on this ministry, and then the spies discovered it, and he and his brave wife and their two

sweet children were sent off to the inhospitable solitudes of Gerussi.

Isdanoff's nearest neighbour was a cab-driver of Kieff, before his banishment. His offence was the same, and his sentence and prison experiences similar. He, however, had only been sentenced to exile for five years. At the expiration of this term he naturally expected to be permitted to return to Kieff and to his droshky. But the police told him he must remain. The gross injustice of this, prompted him, with five other brethren, to attempt to escape through Russia. They plunged into the unknown mountainous district, and after incredible privations and hairbreadth escapes, at length succeeded in crossing the Russian frontier. In Austria three of them were arrested—the Kieff cab-driver being one of the three—and spent six months in prison. During a temporary release, while the authorities communicated with St. Petersburg for instructions respecting them, the cab-driver escaped. The other two were sent back to Russian prisons.

In a hut in Gerussi dwells Brother Makroff, a farmer of the Province of Kursk. He had been in the habit of allowing Gospel meetings in his house. God had blessed them. Souls had been saved; and several persons had been baptized in the river, on the banks of which his farm stood. There was no need for a trial in the case of such a notorious heretic as he, at least so the authorities thought; for without trial he was banished by administrative decree for five years to Transcaucasia, and there placed under police surveillance. When the five years were expired, the authorities added another three years.

Brother Kapustinsky's story ought to be known all over

the wide world. He was a zealous worker, and a heroic martyr for the faith. He was a believer, when the war broke out between Russia and Turkey in 1877. He served during the war in the commissariat department of the Russian army. His duty was to superintend the cartage of provisions to the scenes of the conflict in the south. His waggons went down laden with stores; but they did not return to Russia empty! Many a consignment of Bibles and Testaments was brought into the domain of the Holy Synod by his skill and daring.

He was imprisoned in Kieff, a chief centre of persecution for years, particularly while Count Ignatieff was Governor-general; and thence banished by administrative order to the Persian border of Transcaucasia. He and a colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society, named Morosof, were walked through the streets of Kieff in chains to the railway station, and thence taken to Vladikawkas, whence they marched over the mountains with a criminal gang to their destination, passing through Tiflis on the way. The long mountainous journey would have been exhausting even without the clanking fetters, which galled his limbs. The links shone like polished silver with incessant friction. He arrived in the Gerussi district in 1890.

His wife and children followed him later. They were conveyed over the hundred miles of mountains from Tiflis in an open cart, and both mother and six children were hoarse and feverish when they arrived.

Kapustinsky gave them the most affectionate of welcomes. It was only a tiny scooped-out mud hut; but it was a home, now that the wife and the dear babes had arrived—a sacred place—and together they kneeled down on the damp earth

floor to thank God for their reunion. But the dear woman could not stand the privations. She never shook off the hoarseness and the cough; and there was no doctor near to consult. They could not get enough to eat, and what food they had was of the poorest and coarsest kind. She contracted typhoid fever, and the children also. And then God took her home, and left three wee white-faced little ones, and three a little older, to comfort the desolate husband.

The other brethren called in, to see their bereaved friend. It was the only human consolation possible to him. It was very sweet to him to hear their simple prayers as they crowded inside the hut, and bowed together before the Throne.

"I hear you are having prayer-meetings," said the *pristav* to one of their number, one day.

"Oh, not ordinary prayer-meetings," was the alarmed reply. "We have not held an ordinary prayer-meeting since they were forbidden."

"But you have been having prayer together," exclaimed the officer impatiently. "Don't try to get out of it!"

The accused made no reply.

"Tell me, where have you met for prayer?"

"It would be well for you, if you also had a desire for such meetings."

"I have. I should like very much to be present. Where have you met? I mean to find out; and if you refuse to tell me, you will be punished."

"Brother Kapustinsky has lost his wife, and we have prayed with him to show him our brotherly sympathy."

"Ha! Kapustinsky indeed. Holding prayer-meetings in his *izba*. Well, Kapustinsky shall hear of this."

Brother Kapustinsky indeed "heard of it." He was sentenced to remove to an awful solitude called Terter, where he would be inaccessible to human sympathy. He went with his little ones to Terter, and dug out another hole in the earth for a habitation, and constructed a rough fence around, to keep away the wild beasts from his children. He lived there a few months; and one day when the police on their rounds looked in, they found his body prostrate in death upon the earth floor, and his famished children gazing at it in speechless wonder. He had rejoined his wife, in that home

> "Where the wicked cease from troubling,
> And the weary are at rest."

Pobiedonostzeff sent a priest to Gerussi to convert the exiled Stundists living there to the Greek Orthodox Church. His name was Nicolai Michailof. He had an uphill bit of work, and his lack of success was not surprising. He fitted up a private house as a church, there being no consecrated building within a radius of many miles, carefully decked his altar, and made all ready. But the obstinate heretics could not be induced to attend the performances. These were left to the priest and the police, and the former, shaking off the dust of Gerussi in indignation, persuaded the latter to prohibit all meetings for prayer and Bible-reading, and for the Lord's Supper.

One day M. Beck, the *pristav*, rode past the garden plots of the Stundists. One brother, an infirm man seventy years of age and crippled with rheumatism, sat near the fence. Of course it was his duty to rise briskly to his feet and respectfully salute the dignity of the Tsar and Pobiedon-

ostzeff in the person of the police sergeant; but he was old and stiff and slow, and moved with pain. Beck dismounted from his horse, and savagely lashed the aged Stundist with his whip about the shoulders, and legs, and across the face until he was breathless with exertion, and his victim was prostrated with pain and loss of blood.

The police were not all brutes. Some were most humane and compassionate. Anton Gusenko would have died of fever if it had not been for the kindness of a policeman who gave him medicine, and such nursing as was possible in his spare hours. Gusenko's wife, who was taken ill at the same time as her husband, speedily died; and when he recovered, he was told that his children had been sent back over the snow-covered mountains to Russia, and nobody could give him any information about them.

The breaking up of the Stundists' and Baptists' families was perhaps the most heartrending feature of the campaign of the Holy Synod against the "Sectarians." Dr. Baedeker reported concerning a number of Cossack Stundists whom he had met in exile, that they told him, that when they were sentenced, their wives, eager to accompany them, had sold up their farms, stock, and homes for what they would fetch. Then came word from the Governor-general that they must leave their children behind; thus compelling the poor women to choose between their husbands and their children. They hesitated; but the police settled the matter for them in summary fashion, by seizing the children, handing them to the popes for immersion into the Greek Orthodox Church, and then distributing them here and there to the care of strangers. "One mother was robbed of four children; another, of seven; and a third, of three

RUSSIA'S DELIGHT—THE TSAREVITCH.

little daughters. Many families have in this manner been utterly destroyed," said Dr. Baedeker.

"You stated there were formerly forty Stundist families in this district, and that now there are only four. What has become of the others?"

"Oh," was the answer, "they have been deported by the grace of God to Siberia, and the Trans-Caspian district!"[1]

The Tsar Nicholas II. began the twentieth century excellently, by sending an order to Transcaucasia that the banished brethren at Gerussi should be liberated. It came to the dwellers in those sterile, storm-swept, frozen uplands, like the warm breath of spring, when the waterfalls melt in music among the rocks, and the birds sing, and the great God takes up His white covering from the waking earth, and lays down his carpet of gem-bespangled green, for summer use and beauty.

Alas, the decree of the Emperor was not operative in some parts of his dominions, as the following will prove:—

A Russian Baptist preacher named A. Stoyanow (himself the son of a Stundist, who had lain in prison for a year and a half for his faith in Christ, and whose health had been so shattered by his privations and sufferings that he expired very shortly after his liberation) was cruelly banished in the year 1902 to Turnchansk on the frozen banks of the mighty Yenesi gulf, an arm of the Arctic Ocean.

This brother had the distinction of being the first Baptist preacher in the Crimea. He began his ministry in the early eighties. Here is a letter from this heroic soul, in his awful isolation and misery. It reached its destina-

[1] *Greater Russia*, by Wirt Gerrare, p. 21.

tion in the beginning of the year 1903, and is a terrible sequel to the Tsar's manifesto of liberation issued two years before:—

"My Dear Brother,—I greet you and your family and "all the brethren, and in spirit embrace you; receive the "greeting from your lonely and exiled brother.

"Oh, my dear friends, where have I been sent to, and "how am I to live in this sad place? The inhabitants "here, of which there are only few, are strange people, "whose speech I do not understand, nor do they under- "stand me. There are also a few Russians here; the "others are Yakuts, Tauguses, Samojedes, and Eastjakes. "They do not cultivate the land, but live by fishing and "hunting wild animals, which they skin, and the flesh of "which they eat without bread; they have no bread. "Russian merchants buy of them the skins of the wild "animals, and give them rye in exchange. They do not "know money.

"In winter the sun is not seen during three months; "and in summer for the same length of time there is no "night. I arrived here in April when the days were still "very short and the nights very long.

"This place is situated about 350 miles from the Arctic "Ocean. The summer is so short that the soil cannot "properly thaw. At present the frost is very severe. I "cannot say how many degrees, but it is scarcely possible "to breathe. My feet are frozen, although I have the "clothes supplied by the Government. It was very "difficult for me to walk fourteen miles a day, but I had "to walk all the way to this town, Turnchansk, Province of

" Yenesi, on foot, a distance of about 1150 miles (1700 " versts).

" Please, dear brother, send me a reply soon; write me " all the news. I long to receive an answer. Also please " consult and write how I am to live here, and when shall " I obtain any relief? But now I am sad. My trade is of " no use here. Please write soon. Oh, that you could " see me, how thin and weak I have grown. Those which " are laid into the grave look better than I do. There is " no one to comfort me here. As I write this letter my " eyes fill with bitter tears of sadness. Farewell!

" I am banished to this place for ever, the police officer, " who is in charge of all this district, says. Only if I return " to the Orthodox Church can I be permitted to return to " my home. This answer has made me very sad."[1]

[1] Mr. George Kennan (*Siberia and the Exile System*, vol. ii. p. 22) reprints from the *Russian Gazette* newspaper a short and awful description of the fate of an exile similarly situated to Mr. Stoyanow.

CHAPTER XIX

The Ways into the Fold

THERE were four methods by which the Most Holy Governing Synod, with Konstantine Pobiedonostzeff at its head, endeavoured to secure converts to the Orthodox Church from among "Sectarians," and other heterodox bodies such as Jews and Roman Catholics, and for the matter of that, Mussulmans and Pagans. The first was a grim failure, but the remaining three were fairly successful. They were (1) by Argument; (2) by Temptation; (3) by Fraud; and (4) by Compulsion.

(1) The attempts to restore the lapsed by appeals to reason and to Holy Scripture were such a dismal failure, when resorted to, that they were seldom made. There are, however, records extant of genuine efforts, more or less insolent, in this direction.

A whole parish apostatized to "Sectarianism" (there were many such cases). The pope celebrated his services in the Orthodox Church as usual, but the building was deserted. He wrote to St. Petersburg, making complaint of the lamentable state of affairs; and a high official was sent down to inquire into matters, and if possible to set them right.

"Where is your congregation?" the dignitary asked.

"They are probably holding a meeting in the *izba* of one of their own peasants," replied the pope.

"Let us then go, and see, and hear for ourselves what they do and say," the St. Petersburg official responded.

Together the two men sought out among the wooden cottages the place where prayer was being made. It was the dwelling of a peasant. The benches surrounding the room, the middle of the floor, and the top of the stove, were crowded with his family and neighbours. The men sat upon one side and the women on the other. The holy pictures had been removed, and a few Scripture texts adorned the walls. The table had been placed near one end of the room; upon it lay an open Bible and one or two hymn-books. Of the latter there were enough and to spare, as few in the cottage were able to read. They evidently knew by heart the hymns sung.

The entrance of the visitors created a mild panic. The moujiks and the womenfolk arose to their feet and remained standing in silence.

"What are you here for?" the St. Petersburg official inquired, looking around.

There was silence for a few seconds, and then a peasant answered respectfully—

"We are here to pray to God, batushka."

"Why do you not go to the church, and offer your prayers there?"

"The church is full of *ikons* which we must not worship, and God will hear us if we pray to Him here."

"Well now, we have come to join your meeting. Go on with your praying and your preaching just as if we were not here; we will not interrupt you."

The moujiks looked at each other in blank astonishment.

"Do not be afraid," continued the official, in conciliatory tones. "Sit down and hold your meeting."

Seats were found for the two visitors; and with some hesitation a peasant took up the Bible and read a portion from one of the Gospels. Another peasant offered a prayer, while all present reverently knelt, and fervently responded in subdued tones. With hymns and prayers the meeting continued. There was a pause, and a brother stood up to deliver an exhortation. Upon the face of the pope there was an expression of amused contempt; but the visitor from St. Petersburg appeared to approve of all he heard.

When the address was concluded, a woman came forward and spread a white cloth on the table, upon which she laid a piece of bread, and a vessel containing a little wine. They were about to celebrate the Lord's Supper. After prayers, the bread, and the cup, were passed from hand to hand around the room, each person partaking devoutly of a portion. The evening's worship closed by the singing of a hymn.

"You do not appear to be doing much harm, either to yourselves or to your neighbours," said the official, as he took his departure. "But you ought to attend your church. It is not kind to your friend the pope to leave him by himself. You will come back again in a few weeks, doubtless. Anyhow, there must be no more floggings."

But although the official's report to his superiors in St. Petersburg was favourable, and his counsels conciliatory, the local popes kept up a hostile agitation until several of the leaders were sent into exile.

In 1891 there were seven Stundists in the village of Stanislofsky. An Orthodox missionary was sent to "convert" them. He was to be paid 18 roubles (36s.) per month, and 25 roubles (50s.) for each "convert" he made. The local police rounded up his congregation for him, and he began operations. To his surprise the seven Stundists blankly refused to be converted. They were satisfied to remain as they were.

"But I am sent by the holy bishop on purpose to convert you. You ought to feel greatly flattered to receive attention from such an exalted dignitary!"

"We have gained the attention of the bishop's Master, if indeed he be a servant of Jesus," they replied.

"The bishop commands you to return to the Holy Orthodox Church—you do not dispute his authority?"

"If you had come direct from our batushka the Tsar himself, we dare not listen to you, to obey you."

"Remember my power over you. You *must* return by kindness or by force—which shall it be?"

"We cannot believe," they said, "that the Emperor would send such a man as you, a drunkard, and one quite ignorant of the Scriptures, upon such an errand."

At this the Orthodox missionary and his associates adjourned to the vodka-shop to further deliberate upon the case; which shortly passed out from the methods of persuasion to those of cruel torture. We need not follow it further.

(2) There was a second way into the fold of peace, for the oppressed and the persecuted. Such an one could at any time appease the pack of snarling wolves that followed in his track, by flinging out to them his faith.

Only let him pervert, and the harassing would speedily cease. Every inducement was presented to the heretic to tempt him to rejoin the Orthodox fold. Madame Bubble fawningly offered to him "her purse and her person," as Bunyan says. The Stundist Ratushny [1] was offered by the Bishop of Kherson a lucrative position in the Orthodox Church [2] if he would forsake the hated Evangelical heresy.

The case of the Jews offers an illustration on the largest scale of the glittering baits held out, by Church and State, to the renegade.[3] Of the six millions of Jews in Russia, about five and a half millions live within the *Pale*.[4] The Jewish convert to "Christianity" is at liberty *to leave the Pale*! Ah, you do not appreciate what that means! The *Pale* is the section (consisting of about 100 towns in West and South Russia, and Poland) into which Russia crams her Hebrew citizens. It is packed to suffocation and pestilence. There is no room either for decency, or health, or trade. The streets and tenements of certain districts in towns "within the *Pale*" exceed in horror the descriptions in Dante's *Inferno*. You feel sick, as you read of these places. But then there is always a simple and direct way out for everybody; become an Orthodox "Christian"!

This is only the beginning of the privileges of the pervert. He is by law absolved from all further responsibility for his Jewish wife and children. He may, if he please, marry again, a "Christian," of course. But his Jewish wife may not remarry without his permission. He may have

[1] See Chapter VIII.
[2] *Contemporary Review*, January 1892.
[3] On this subject see *The New Exodus*, by Harold Frederic.
[4] *Red Russia*, by J. Foster Fraser, p. 67.

possession of the children if he cares to do so, to bring them up "Christians" like himself. He is free from all the well-nigh intolerable exactions of the law from the Jew, such as special taxes for the privilege of wearing the Hebrew dress. The public schools are now thrown open to his children; before, they were denied the right to enter them; and with education, the path is open to Government appointments; his sons may become tchins. If he enter the army, he may now rise above the ranks. In countless ways he realises that he is now a citizen.

Nor need he in his heart believe the doctrines of the Christian religion. These have for centuries been hateful to him and his race, associated as they have been with devilish cruelty. He may still hate them, and loathe the priests. He must swear he is a "Christian," that is all. Any contemptible hypocrite is, to the authorities, superior to a non-Orthodox, be he Jew or Gentile.

The door being thus so temptingly set open, peace and credit, and a share of the plunder, being used as baits, "the way of transgressors" having been made so pleasant, and on the other hand "wisdom's ways" being so dark and desperate, it is not to be wondered at that some fell away, "having loved this present world." The Russian press asserted that in the year 1891, between January and April upwards of 50,000 Jews surrendered their ancient faith in favour of the Russian Church.

That any Jews, or "heretic" Christians, endured to the end in the midst of their fiery trials, is a magnificent testimony to the preserving grace of God.

It ought to be remembered that the Russian laws make one conspicuous exception, in the prohibitory statutes

under which Jews in general live. The Jewess prostitute, holding the "yellow ticket" of the registered harlot, is at liberty to ply her trade freely, in any part of the Tsar's dominions.[1]

Mr. Prelooker has placed on record a typical illustration of the "rewards" bestowed on perverts to Orthodoxy.

"A dissenter, Kosloff, in Dorpat, returned to the Greek Church; his wife, Ivanovna, remaining faithful to her denomination of the Thedoseysutsi. Kosloff then formally married another woman of the same sect, who also consented to conversion. Ivanovna petitioned the local magistrate to compel Kosloff to contribute towards the support of his children, whom he had left with her. The magistrate ordered him to pay the sum of 100 roubles (about £10) *in ten years*. Ivanovna appealed to a higher court; which awarded her 20 roubles yearly (about £2) for her life. Kosloff appealed against this award, and finally the case reached the Most Holy Synod. The Synod relieved the ex-husband of all obligations towards his wife 'in order not to give to dissenters a pretext for thinking that their claims are protected by law.'"[2]

(3) The process of conversion by fraud took place on the most extensive scale among the Greek Uniates of Poland, a branch of the Greek Orthodox Church that did not break away from the Latins in the great cleavage of the tenth century. The Holy Synod in St. Petersburg has for centuries hankered after the allegiance of the Uniates, with the same morbid wistfulness that Ahab displayed for

[1] See *Democracy and Liberty*, by W. E. H. Lecky, vol. i. p. 468.
[2] *Under the Czar and Queen Victoria*, by J. Prelooker, p. 71.

the possession of Naboth's vineyard. The Minister of the Interior played most successfully the part of Jezebel in this comedy-tragedy, and by a *coup* secured the vineyard, or at any rate a considerable part of it. The Uniate bishops and other dignitaries, for a substantial consideration allowed themselves to be converted; and then one fine morning the humble Uniate clergy and the laity, read in their newspapers that the Greek Uniates had at length cast off their alliance with Rome, and now fully acknowledged the authority of the Holy Synod of the Russian Church. Many thousands promptly denied that they had taken any such step, and complained that they had never been even consulted; but a large proportion of the Uniates quietly succumbed, followed their bishops, and became "converted." A similar fraud was perpetrated on the Lutheran peasants in the Baltic Provinces.[1]

The island *Worms* (Esthonia) furnishes another instance of conversion by subterfuge, with just a flavour of compulsion in it. Seven hundred persons were "converted" in the course of eight days—an excellent piece of work. The credit of this performance belongs to a zealous Russian priest from Hapsal, who crossed over and alarmed the inhabitants by telling them that the Government was about to buy the island, and everybody who did not belong to the Orthodox Church would have to leave. The astute priest carefully timed his visit so that many of the menfolk were away at sea (they were fishermen) on his arrival. Their mothers, wives, and daughters, having no masculine element to consult with, and in the awful fear of being obliged to break up their homes and quit the island,

[1] See p. 130.

stampeded in the direction of Orthodoxy. When in due course the fishermen came back to the little harbour, a great surprise awaited them; but as it was a penal offence, punishable with transportation, for any member of the Orthodox Church to forsake his religion, or for a non-Orthodox to entice an Orthodox so to do, there was no escaping from the trap in which they had been caught.

A few months later one of the converts gave birth to a child. The law said it must be baptized into the Greek Orthodox Church, as its mother was of that faith. Both father and mother demurred. The parish pope notified the authorities of the delinquency, and both parents were sentenced to four months' imprisonment. The "Sectarian" fisherman and his wife, with the baby at her breast, were dragged off to herd with criminals; and one night, as mother and infant lay sleeping in the cell, the police entered, awakened her, stole the child from her arms, notwithstanding her passionate pleadings with them for pity, told her she should not see her boy again until he was twenty-one years of age, and carried him away to the priest to be baptized. The child was removed from the island to be brought up as a member of the Holy Russian Church.

(4) Of the bloody attempts at conversion by compulsion, instances might be given sufficient to fill many volumes. In Kieff, the Mecca of the Russians, the city of Vladimir, the scene of the "conversion" of the entire nation from heathenism, two bailiff's clerks were brought to the saving knowledge of the Lord; and at the same time, four other men and an old woman. This could never be allowed. They must return to the fold, instantly. To bring them

back, they were arrested, cast into the damp and dark dungeons of the prison-fortress, stripped and strapped to pillars and beaten until the red blood trickled down their bare legs to the floor. It was quite too much for the old lady. She fainted, early in the proceedings; and when they had unfastened the straps and laid her limp form upon the ground, they discovered that their power to torment her into their Church had been nullified by the angel of death.

"How did you feel while you were being flogged?" inquired the evangelist Schimanski, afterwards, of one of the victims.

"As hot as was the blood running down my limbs, so hot was the love of Jesus in my heart," was the answer.

In the same sacred city of Kieff a young girl of sixteen, who had too loudly proclaimed her dissent from Orthodoxy, was taken to the prison, stripped, and beaten by the muscular jailers appointed to that duty, until her entire body from neck to feet was one purple mass streaked with crimson gashes. Her shrieks fell at length into sobs, and her sobs into dull groans. Her father who was present at the sickening ordeal, at the instigation of the ecclesiastics who supervised the proceedings, entreated his daughter to yield, and pay the required homage to the *ikon*, which the popes from time to time held before her. This she heroically refused to do as long as consciousness remained in her. When at length no spot remained upon which the jailers could inflict their blows, the monsters thrust shoemakers' awls into the soles of her feet. The agony of this fresh torture aroused afresh her benumbed sensibilities, but only for a few minutes. God took the dear sufferer away. Even compulsion had failed to "convert" her.

The inhuman individuals in whose hands she died were alarmed to find that they had gone beyond their warrant in killing her. They were brought to their trial for murder; and the court inflicted upon them the sentence of three and a half years' imprisonment. The shameful inadequacy of the punishment, sufficiently discloses on which side the sympathies of the judge lay.

"I have killed people myself in battle," said Vassili Verestchagin, the famous Russian painter, in conversation with an Englishman, "and I can say from experience that the excitement and even the feeling of satisfaction in killing a man, is the same as when you bring down game in hunting."[1]

It would appear that even when the prey is a helpless and inoffensive young girl, in her teens, who needs no pursuit, but is just quietly fetched into the slaughter-house and tortured to death, the "feeling of satisfaction," the "mad lust for slaughter," is equally keen.

One of the last acts of the Tsar Alexander III. was the issuing of a ukaze—on 4th July 1894—which was forwarded to all provincial governors, declaring Stundists to be an evil sect, dangerous to Church and State; forbidding absolutely all their meetings; and depriving them of every right and privilege enjoyed by the Russian people. The issue of this decree was the fanning anew of the fires of fanaticism and hatred; and the letting loose upon these unhappy people of a new pack of terrors and cruelties.

[1] *Review of Reviews*, Jan. 1899, p. 30.

CHAPTER XX

What did they Believe?

THIS would be an interminable chapter if it were intended to set forth in detail all the articles of faith held by, and attributed to, the endless variety of "Sectarians" about whom the historians of religions in Russia, tell us. We are horrified at the sensational recital of the alleged ritual practices of mysterious fanatics who, hiding from the light of publicity, perpetrate atrocities upon the defenceless, in fulfilment of their religious vows.

Who has not heard of the *Sacrificers*, for instance? They were one of the earliest of the Russian sects to be brought to the acquaintance of this generation of British readers. It was alleged that they believed it necessary to find a human victim, on whom they personally must lay the punishment of their sins, in the form of physical torments ending in death. The victim was first enticed by a temptress to some lonely haunt, where he was seized, and carried to a subterranean chamber. Here he was tortured for several days by their priestesses, and then slain, to the accompaniment of wild songs and frantic dances.

It can be easily demonstrated from their writings that the enemies of Russian dissent from the Orthodox Church, possessed glowing imaginations; and were not always guiltless of

sending false reports to the higher authorities, in order to cover, with a plausible excuse, their heartless plundering of their inoffensive neighbours. We therefore receive these reports *cum grano salis*. Frankly, we have more faith in the man who is prepared to suffer for his beliefs, than we have in the other man who causes him to suffer for them. Our inquiry is, what beliefs lay behind the exceptional lives of the sober, rational, industrious, "sectarian" peasantry of Russia? What made them to differ so widely in conduct and character from their neighbours? The difference this religion made in those affected by it, is so startling, so radical, that the religion which caused it, must be a subject of the greatest interest.

The early Dukhobortsi, and the Molokani of the later years of the eighteenth century, and the Stundists of more recent times, had definite articles of faith. Russian writers have given these creeds to the world as they understood them, and many details show a striking correspondence to the beliefs of the Evangelical Christians of the West.

For example, they held tenaciously that *the Kingdom of Christ was not of this world*; and that human governments were intruding into a realm in which they had no rights, when they interfered with a man in his relation to God. This profound principle appears to have been common to all the Russian "Sectarians."

Equally emphatic was their repudiation of *authority in matters of faith within the Church* itself. And therefore they were distrustful of all ecclesiastical dignities, and for the most part rejected them altogether; particularly popes or village priests, and their superiors in office. They denied strenuously that sacerdotal functions were exercised by the

apostles, or the primitive preachers of the Gospel. With the rejection of ecclesiastical dignities and authority, went the practices of auricular confession, fastings, and penances. Marriage too, to many of them, became a social and personal contract; and, as the State refused for many years to recognise their marriages, the strength of their principles, and the high quality of their honour, were continually being demonstrated by the purity of their morals.

A prominent article of the faith of all the early Russian "Sectarians" was the doctrine of *the indwelling Christ.* As we have already seen, this doctrine was grossly abused owing to the illiteracy of these peasants, and the consequent lack of familiarity with the teaching of Holy Scripture. Indeed, it is just here that Russian "sectarianism" has most frequently and most lamentably gone astray. The Chlistic sects are illustrations of this. These sects were offshoots from the Raskolniks or Old Believers. Their religious mysticism led them into all kinds of singularities of worship, such as dancing, jumping, and other neurotic physical performances. Their delight in finding themselves perfectly free from dry and dead formalism, was exuberant. They called themselves "Christs." Their enemies called them "Chlists," *i.e.* "whips," because they occasionally flogged themselves in their religious enthusiasm. This, however, was no excuse for their brutal foes flogging them to death, as they sometimes did.

That Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit indwells the children of God is a truth that all true Christians rejoice to believe; and it is infinitely more rational and more scriptural, than the superstition that He is to be found within a "consecrated" wafer, or upon the surface of a gaudy picture.

The "Sectarians" (with the exception of the Old Believers) were at one in their *rejection of ikon-worship*, adoration of saints, veneration of relics of saints, and all such materialistic worship. It is delightful to read how thoroughly they emancipated themselves from this heathen bondage. At one time they would go round and collect from the *izbas* of their converts—when, as was sometimes the case, an entire village forsook the Orthodox Church at once—all the holy pictures and outward emblems, would put them into a sack, and fling them into a river. On other occasions they would take them to the house of the pope.

"Here, batushka. We must no longer worship these! *Zaprestcheno*, it is forbidden. We worship the Invisible God alone. Ephraim says, 'What have I to do any more with idols?'"[1]

The stern *self-discipline* exercised by these revolters from a mere superficial religion is seen in the case of the Skopzy, a sect that is in existence at this day in certain districts of South Russia, numbering many adherents. It is said that most of the jewellers of Moscow belong to this denomination, which has, however, forsaken the fierce doctrines of the mortification of the flesh to ensure the well-being of the soul, that led them to enjoin castration upon their members, and placed them somewhere on the level of Hindoo fakirs. When the "Sectarians" are accused, as they occasionally have been, of gross animalism, it is well to bear this sect in mind. It at least proves that some of the "Sectarians" held the extremest views respecting the vital necessity of personal chastity.

The "Sectarians" upheld the doctrine of the *necessity of*

[1] Hosea xiv. 8.

personal faith in Christ to be needful for salvation, as distinct from the performance of ceremonial rites, the profession of certain articles of belief, or adhesion to any outward ecclesiastical society. The Baptist view of the ordinance of baptism as a voluntary surrender to immersion in water and emergence from water, in token of personal acceptance of Christ, and participation in His resurrection from the dead, appears to have been very generally accepted. Professor Odest Novitsky (quoted by Mr. Aylmer Maude), who was one of the earliest writers respecting the Dukhobors (his book was published in 1832), and who wrote to dispute and condemn, gives this feature a prominent position in his exposition of the creed of these people. This was, of course, the position of the Mennonites, as it still is of the Stundists, or those of them who admit the validity of the Gospel ordinances.

Evangelist Pavloff in 1884 gave the following, as the points of difference between the Molokans of Southern Russia and the Baptists :—

1. They think, like ourselves, the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of belief and conduct; but they include the Apocrypha.

2. Justification is not only produced by faith, but also by meritorious works; they therefore dispute forgiveness of sins, and acceptance before God *in this life*.

3. They reject Baptism and the Lord's Supper, supposing that these ordinances are to be comprehended in a spiritual sense.

4. They object to the office of the preacher.

5. They pray for the dead.

The Mennonite Brethren hold, like the Society of Friends, that professing Christians *should not engage in military service.* The authorities have met their scruples by granting them exemption, on condition that they undertake a given period of service in the State forests, in felling and planting trees, which are such a large measure of the national wealth. To this they readily consent.

As with the early Nonconformists of Great Britain and the western continental nations, almost the only sources of information respecting the Russian non-Orthodox, are the writings of their foes, who sometimes denounce, but more frequently ridicule, them.

A Russian journalist, Mr. Skvortsoff, who announced himself to be "a professor of the science of refuting sectarians," published in 1892 a long and detailed report, the result, he said, of "ten years' study of the growth and development of Stundism."

Dr. Dillon has translated and summarised Skvortsoff's articles. Mr. Stead said of Skvortsoff, that he was "about "as trustworthy an authority upon the real nature of "Stundism, as a creature of Archbishop Laud's would have "been, if he had drawn up a report upon Puritanism."[1] However, from this mass of scornful abuse and self-righteous misrepresentation, we glean some interesting particulars respecting the beliefs and practices of the South Russian non-Orthodox.

The imminence of the second advent was a doctrine preached among the Stundist peasantry, particularly by Dooshenkovsky in 1888, and afterwards by a wheelwright named Malevanny, a peasant woman named Melania, and

[1] *Review of Reviews*, March 1893, p. 320.

others. The doctrine was accepted by hundreds with enthusiasm. "The movement spread like wildfire," said Skvortsoff. Such a practical application did many of the peasants make of this teaching that, believing the end of the world to be a matter only of days, they ceased to till their lands, parted from their cattle and possessions, and rapidly degraded to a state of destitution. This appears to have had a salutary effect. Their more prudent fellow-believers set them upon their feet again; and they became once more industrious, thrifty, and prosperous citizens. Meanwhile the leaders above mentioned, with others, were arrested and punished in various ways; some being incarcerated in monasteries, others in lunatic asylums, and others sent into exile by administrative order. Skvortsoff urged upon the authorities that "no time should be lost in taking resolute measures." It may be guessed what he had in mind.

Mr. Skvortsoff's report tells of peasants' meetings in which were dancing, quaking, prophesying, the exercise of the "gift of tongues," and other practices suggestive of extreme nervous excitement. But he does not claim that these were other than exceptional proceedings.

The care of their poor on the part of the wealthier members, was a feature of apostolic Christianity reproduced among the believers in South Russia and referred to by Skvortsoff. "Equality and brotherhood are watchwords " which are never out of their mouths; and they are not " merely words, but living ideas."

There were amusing features in Skvortsoff's report. There was the case of Father Loozanoff of Toorbovka. This pope set himself to woo and win Stundists back to

the true fold with such zeal and success that the Most Holy Synod heard of him, and rewarded his efforts substantially. Then came a wave of Stundist revival, and all his work was undone. His converts, to a man, forsook him for something better.

Is it not a reason for thankfulness that those newly released from their ancient religious bondage should, in so many vital points of their theological beliefs, approximate so nearly to the position occupied by the Evangelical Christians of the Western world? This gives them a considerable claim upon our sympathies and our help; and gives us great hopes as to the future of Evangelical religion in Russia.

The leaders of the Russian Evangelical bodies have in these later years given careful study to the creeds of Western Christendom; and comparing these with the Scriptures, have consequently brought themselves into a general agreement with their fellow-believers in other lands.

The Baptists of South Russia printed and published in 1906 in Rostov on the Don, a head-centre of Baptist activities in the south, an attractive manual of sixteen pages, setting forth the articles of their creed with Scripture references. It does not differ materially from similar documents published in Great Britain and in the United States of America; and it is thus an instance of the unity of the Evangelical Faith, arrived at by the independent study of the Word of God.

PART IV

THE REIGN OF TSAR NICHOLAS II.
(1894–1909)

Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n! the seed,
The little seed they laughed at, in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

. . . . . .

Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

TENNYSON, *The Princess.*

TSAR NICHOLAS II.

CHAPTER XXI

"The Heaven is high, and the Tsar is far away."

Russian Proverb.

NEVER did monarch receive a more enthusiastic welcome from the million voices of his warm-hearted subjects than did Nicholas II. on the morning of his coronation in Moscow, 25th May 1895.

Amid the joyous ringing of the bells of the sixteen hundred cathedrals and churches of the city, the booming of many guns, the inspiring strains of countless bands of music, and the incessant cheering of vast multitudes of people gathered from far and wide, the young monarch rode forth in splendour from the Petrovsky Palace, to take possession of the house of his fathers, the Palace of the Kremlin.

An American visitor thus describes the young Tsar in this the supreme hour of his life—

"A fair-haired boy, slightly built, with blonde and silken beard, astride a horse that is white as untrodden snow, and as gentle as the plaything of a child, clad in a simple uniform of dark green, and holding his gloved hand constantly to his astrachan cap in salute. The veriest socialist in the world —yes, even a deep-dyed Nihilist, would, as he glanced upon that youthful figure, have cast his theories to the wind, and shouted, in spite of himself, 'Long live the Emperor!'"[1]

[1] *In Joyful Russia*, by J. A. Logan, Junr., p. 101.

Could any fact have more thoroughly attested the loyalty to the throne, and the reliability in the service of the State, of those who had bravely suffered for the Gospel, than the following?—

During the coronation festivities the utmost precautions were taken to ensure the safety of the young monarch. In the vast throngs that filled the boulevards and squares and streets, it was almost to be expected that there might be hidden those who would not hesitate to make attempts upon his life. Therefore, to line the roadways, and guard his person, men were selected who could be trusted the most implicitly of all the Tsar's vast army. Considerable numbers of beloved brethren in Christ, Baptists, and Stundists, some of them but recently returned from their exile, were chosen, and drafted into Moscow, for this special service.

Havelock's saints were the men looked to in emergencies, in the days of the Indian Mutiny. They could always be relied upon by their officers. The converted Russian moujiks were, even by the testimony of their enemies, of the same mettle.

The Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, a bewilderment of stately halls, is one of the largest buildings in the world. It is almost a little city for space and accommodation. Who that has visited its noble apartments and magnificent reception chambers, can ever forget the impression produced upon the mind by this superlative aggregation of grandeur. The golden guest room; the St. George's throne room; the Moorish room, with its circular tessellated pavement from Pompeii, and its conservatory; the halls of the golden plates and salt-boxes; the great crystal candlesticks, and silver vases, and inlaid tables, and tables of lapis lazuli;

here are all the material tokens of lavish luxury and opulent splendour, uniting the gorgeousness of the east with the stateliness of the west.

In the room next to that in which the Tsar Alexander II. breathed his last, a famous picture hangs. It is but a small picture, and hanging between two windows, it is not well seen. It is a representation of the three Tsars who bestowed the three greatest blessings upon the realm over which they ruled. They are Vladimir the Great, Peter the Great, and Alexander II. Through the first came Christianity into Russia, as the nominal religion of the land; through the second came western civilisation; and the third was the liberator of Russia's many millions of serfs.

During the present reign a fourth boon has come to the Russian people. The subjects of Nicholas II. now enjoy, that which Russians never before could lay claim to, freedom to worship God each man in his own fashion, "none daring to make him afraid." Here is a boon no whit inferior to either of the former three; a boon which is the logical complement of the others, and indeed without which the others are robbed of their value, for he is the most abject of slaves who cannot call his soul his own.

To what extent the granting of liberty of conscience to the Russian people was owing to the womanly influence and intercession of the Tsarina, we may never know. But British readers will like to think that this Imperial lady, in a very difficult position, and amid innumerable hostile influences, extended a generous Christian sympathy towards the oppressed and the afflicted, and used her best endeavours for the amelioration of their condition.

The story is told of Her Majesty—what measure of

truth there may be in it we cannot say—that on her third Christmas Eve as Empress of Russia (1896) her husband invited her to give him the privilege of gratifying her wishes in some way on the day following.

"Please permit a little more religious toleration!" she said sweetly.

"That will come by and by," answered the Tsar, with a smile.

On 14th October 1898 Mr. W. S. Oncken (son of the late Pastor J. G. Oncken of Hamburg) sent a petition from Copenhagen on behalf of the Stundist exiles to His Majesty the Tsar. It is such an exact representation of the state of things at that date, that it deserves a place in this story. Moreover, it was efficacious. For as a result, the Tsar sent orders that the Baptists were to be "left undisturbed in the performance of their religious rites."

Mr. Oncken said: "May it please your Majesty "graciously to grant a considerate hearing to this my "humble and earnest prayer on behalf of the persecuted "Stundists in Russia.

"The terrible and relentless persecution of these "Evangelical Christians still continues. Men, women, and "children, driven from house and home, are lingering in "abject misery, as outlaws, in such distant barren and "inhospitable districts as Gerussi, Erivan, and the region "of the Persian Gulf. Many of these men, treated as "criminals, have been sent in chains to Siberia; and their "wives accompanying them have been subjected to un-"speakable indignities by the military escorts. Their "children have been taken from them to be brought up "by strangers, or even by their persecutors.

"The men and women thus treated with heartrending "cruelty have done no wrong. They are law-abiding loyal "subjects of your Majesty. . . . No moral reproach of any "kind attaches to them. They are undergoing these . . . "sufferings . . . because, obedient to the dictates of their "conscience . . . they desire to adhere closely to the "teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ as contained in the "New Testament, and thus to live God-fearing, simple, "pure, and holy lives. . . . These lowly Christians have "in all their trials never ceased to pray for the welfare of "your Majesty, and of their native country."

The practical local application of the decrees of personal liberty in matters of conscience is so slow a process that eight years later—in September 1906—we find the Molokan Conference of Astrakhanka sending a resolution to M. Stolypin, the Prime Minister, making request for the release of two brethren, named respectively Afonin and Gorin, who in spite of the Imperial edict of 1905 guaranteeing religious liberty, were at that date living in exile in Siberia at the Arctic mouth of the river Yenisei, "if indeed they were still alive." They had been banished thither solely on account of their faith.

No one will hold the Tsar personally responsible for every detail of maladministration in his enormous empire. The people are slowly and painfully struggling forward; and if Nicholas II. will regard the aspirations and efforts of his people towards knowledge and freedom, with sympathy, and will give them his powerful assistance, he will win the approval and affection of millions of his fellow-mortals in Russia, and in all lands.

CHAPTER XXII

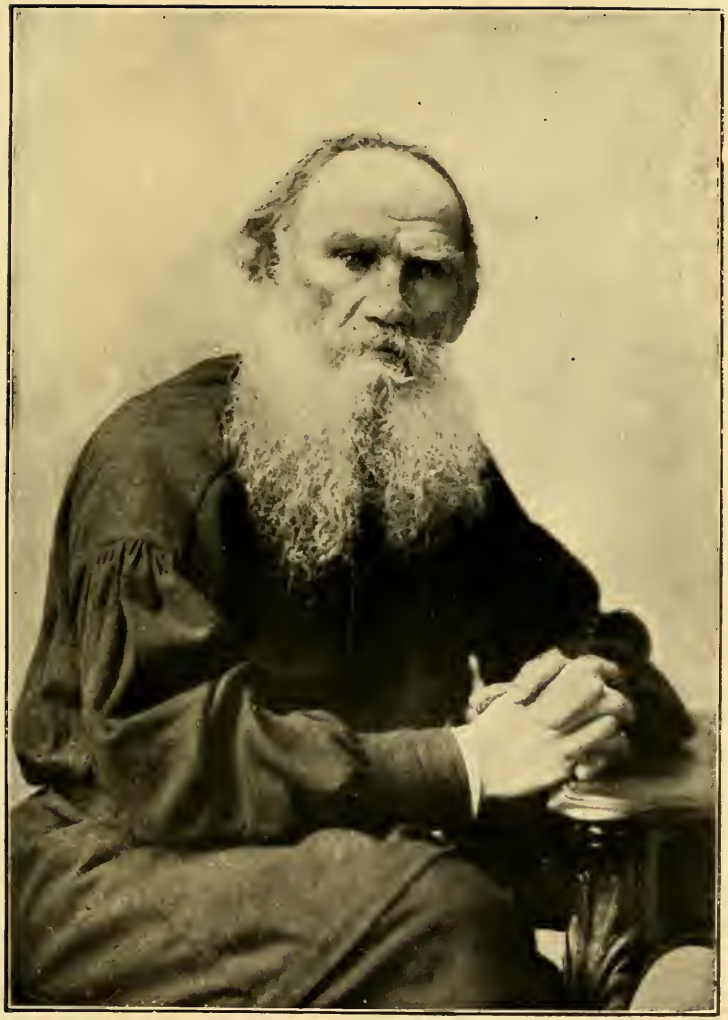
The Dukhobors and Count Leo Tolstoy

IN the midst of the midnight of the religious intolerance of the reign of Alexander III., perhaps no human star shone so brightly as that of Count Leo Tolstoy. It was during that reign that the writings and teachings of Tolstoy became familiarly known throughout the civilised world; and even filtered through, into the dense ignorance of the Russian peasantry, by means largely of foreign translations read by the students in the Russian Universities, and spoken of freely everywhere.

The Count is of interest to us in this work, although personally a strenuous opponent of Evangelical truth, as a stalwart champion of the right of freedom of conscience.

Away in Transcaucasia, the Dukhobortsi, to whom reference has already been made, enjoyed under Alexander the Liberator considerable freedom from persecution, and occupied for the Russians the Kars district, acquired as the fruit of the Russo-Turkish war.[1] They lived at peace with their Mohammedan neighbours, and as far as possible with all men, although veracious history reports sharp quarrels among themselves. The rival parties

[1] *A Peculiar People*, by Aylmer Maude, p. 150.



COUNT LEO TOLSTOY.

"ceased even to bow to each other in acknowledgment of the indwelling divinity."[1]

Their tenets forbade them to bear arms, or to resist evil; and this unresisting meekness became to their predatory neighbours in the wild mountain gorges of Circassia and Georgia, first an opportunity for plunder, then a subject of perplexing suspicion, and ultimately an occasion of admiration, approval, and cordial friendship.

But days of darkness and of dread swiftly approached on the death of the Tsar in 1881. Five or six years later, came the Imperial command that the Dukhobor men must take their places in the ranks of the Russian army. Their consternation and distress were extreme. Many were the anxious conferences held as to the line of policy to be adopted in this new situation; and it was at length decided to make an outward show of obedience to the authorities, and to bear arms as required; but on no account to use them against the lives of their fellow-men. In action, the rifles and swords were to be flung upon the ground, as their forefathers had done in previous Russian wars.

Peter Verigin, for the past twenty-three years the leader of the Dukhobortsi, and at the present time resident with them on their settlements in Western Canada, succeeded in 1886 to the leadership, claiming to be a reincarnation of Jesus Christ. Mr. Aylmer Maude, quoting from a confidential report furnished to the Russian authorities by the then Governor of Tiflis, gives us much interesting information respecting the mysteries surrounding Verigin's

[1] *A Peculiar People*, by Aylmer Maude, p. 167.

birth and accession to the leadership.[1] However, the greater part of the Dukhobors acknowledged the validity of his claim to descent from the former leader, and swore solemn allegiance to him.

Verigin soon got into trouble with the authorities owing to his anti-military attitude and influence; and under an "administrative order" he was exiled to the far north, to the frozen shores of the White Sea. In the winter of 1894–5 he was transferred to Siberia; and was marched southward to Moscow, to join the gang of convicts travelling thence eastwards over the Urals. His followers in the Caucasus, who were continually in communication with him by means of special messengers travelling for this purpose between the Caucasus and Archangel, sent a deputation of three of their number to meet him in the Moscow prison, and receive his messages and commands.

These three Dukhobors returning from Moscow, probably as *bogomoltsy*, who in Russia travel from place to place, very much as tramps do in England, and are willingly maintained by the gifts of the peasantry everywhere,[2] called upon Tolstoy. Tolstoy was ever an admirer of Russian pilgrims. The more ragged and woebegone their appearance, the greater his interest in them. He felt it to be eminently Christlike that men should be willing to go forth without wallet or purse, friendless and footsore, strangers in their native land, without property, home, ambition, comfort, covetousness, or care.

These Dukhobor pilgrims consequently received a

[1] *A Peculiar People*, by Aylmer Maude, p. 151.

[2] See *Maxim Gorky: his Life and Writings*, by Dr. Dillon (chapter, "The Barefoot Brigade"), p. 160.

cordial welcome from the novelist at *Yasnaya Poliana* near Tula. To him they unfolded their history and principles, which information he received with approval and sympathy.

On that day the Dukhobortsi secured a loyal and powerful ally and advocate. Tolstoy became to some extent their teacher also.

The mind of the average Russian moujik was soil uncongenial to the Tolstoyan philosophy. The Count has not gained the ear of the Russian peasantry in general; nor of the races other than Russian that own allegiance to the throne of the Tsars. "There is no doubt that this lack of influence, combined with his celebrity abroad, accounts largely for the indulgence with which Tolstoy is treated by the Russian Goverment," wrote Mr. R. E. C. Long in 1901.

But while he was unsuccessful among the masses of the people, the Caucasian Dukhobors drank in some of his ideas with avidity. A Government official reporting to St. Petersburg respecting Caucasian affairs, said: "The propaganda of the teachings of Count Tolstoy among the Dukhobortsi are stronger than anything else; and to their influence must be ascribed the obstinacy of these Sectarians in their anarchical aspirations. . . . Whole families have now begun to accept his doctrine."

In his remote Siberian prison, Peter Verigin became acquainted with some of the Count's writings. These made a deep impression upon his mind, and bore their fruit in his subsequent instructions to his followers, first in the Caucasus, and later, in Canada.

The conversion of Tolstoy synchronised with the advent of Alexander III. to the throne in 1881. An

exploration among the slums of Moscow, and a close acquaintance with the grovelling misery in which the greater part of the industrial population of that ancient city lived, awoke his conscience.

"How can I, how can the class to which I belong," he exclaimed, "spend our lives in selfish ease and luxury, pampering our every foolish fancy and vanity, when the great multitudes of our brothers are herded in squalor and doomed to unceasing and exhausting toil for our advantage?"

The fifty years of his past life, spent in atheistical self-indulgence, were an occasion of keen regret to him. His future he dedicated to God and humanity. He was righteously wroth with the Orthodox Church, to which he then nominally belonged, that it was so indifferent to the sorrows surging around it, and so impotent to deliver the people from their grievous bondage.

If at this critical juncture in his career, Tolstoy had been privileged to meet with a capable spiritual guide, who like Priscilla and Aquilla would have "expounded to him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts xviii. 26), how widely different might have been the results! Instead of those crude theories of antagonism to the social order in its entirety, which, being put to the test in the subsequent history of the Dukhobortsi in Canada, have so utterly failed,[1] we should probably have had in central Russia a mighty Evangelical prophet of God arousing his native

[1] See *A Peculiar People*, by Aylmer Maude—chapters, "The Pilgrimage," "Communism," and "A Criticism of Tolstoy." Also, *The Dukhobors*, by J. Elkinton—chapter, "Relations with the Civil Authorities."

land, princes and peasantry, with those sublime Gospel truths in which we delight.[1]

Tolstoy, feeling his need of spiritual guidance, made the acquaintance of a Novgorod peasant named Sutayeff, whose name was known on the countryside, owing to his sturdy refusal to allow his children to be baptized after the Orthodox fashion.

Count and peasant together studied the Word of God earnestly and often; and gradually Tolstoy's ideas respecting the contents of the sacred volume took definite shape. He scrutinised the canon of Scripture, and with unhesitating decision settled a canon for himself. He rejected first the entire Old Testament; then the Book of the Revelation, which he spoke of as "ravings"; the Acts of the Apostles followed; then the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and the rest, on the ground that they do not add to our information; and, finally, the miracles recorded in the Gospels, to which "it is quite impossible to give the least credit." There was left of the wreckage, the teachings of our Lord as recorded in the four Gospels; and these he applied according to principles laid down by himself.

This eminent Russian stands squarely for a pacifically anarchical society in which shall exist no government, no laws, no army, no police, no church, no professionalism, no prisons, no punishments. In his defence of his position he is described, by those who have interviewed him, as impatient of objection and dissent.

With Tolstoy's original theology and ethics, he developed

[1] See the judicious observations of Prince Serge Wolkonsky on this subject, in his *Lowell Lectures* (Boston, Mass.), *Russian History and Literature*, p. 267.

an unaccountable antipathy to Evangelical religion. Visitors from England and America, who have talked with him in his home at *Yasnaya Poliana*, have all been impressed with his denunciations of organised Christianity and the ministry of the Gospel. In a strikingly imaginative picture of hell, he gives the premier place to "the demon who invented the Church." He supports his contention, it is but just to add, by declaring that the Church brought "the infamy of persecution." To that extent multitudes of Christians within the Church are in hearty agreement with him; the infamy of religious persecution is indeed of the devil. But the Master, to whom Tolstoy owns allegiance, Himself appointed the Church, His spiritual body, His holy bride. That Church, however, is not an outward and worldly organisation, but the spiritual, and invisible, and universal body of believers in His name.

The reading of Tolstoy's writings by Peter Verigin in his prison at the base of the Northern Urals, on the shores of the Gulf of Obi, caused him to send to his followers, by the Black Sea, express orders that thenceforward they were to refuse not only to use weapons at the order of the Government, but also to carry them.

Accordingly, their elders appointed a certain evening in June 1895, in which the peasants from all the Dukhobor villages should bring in their rifles, etc., and make a huge bonfire of them. The Governor of Tiflis, hearing that there was an unaccountable excitement among them, sent an officer to command their elders to appear before him. The officer arrived when the proceedings were just beginning, and delivered his message.

"Tell the Governor," they replied, "that we are engaged

in appearing before a Greater than he, and cannot therefore obey his summons."[1]

This unexpected insubordination put the Governor into a rage. He immediately ordered out a sotnia of Cossacks, who galloped to the Dukhobor headquarters. They were just in time to see the smouldering remains of the pile of rifles, surrounded by crowds of peasants, with their wives and children, who had been eagerly watching the leaping flames. The Cossacks fell upon them unmercifully and beat them with their heavy nagaikas about the face and shoulders and head ; upon young and old, adults and children, all within reach, fell their terrible blows. When the people were dispersed, except those who lay bleeding, and in some cases dying, upon the ground, the officers in charge distributed the soldiers among the *izbas*. Here in the humble homes of the people they gave rein to their evil propensities without let or hindrance, bringing unnamable terrors and agonies into the families upon whom they were thus ruthlessly quartered.

Then came orders from the authorities that the villages were to be broken up, the farms to be forsaken, and the people removed to localities higher up the mountain-sides, among the isolated Georgian settlements. Thither the Dukhobors were accordingly marched, carrying with them such poor wreckage as they were able to rescue from the appalling destruction wrought by the soldiers; and there they were left to endure all the severities of the coming winter in these bleak and inhospitable regions, without

[1] The entire pathetic story from the lips of a participant is told in *The Dukhobors*, by Joseph Elkinton (Ferris & Leach, Philadelphia), pp. 152–158.

homes to shelter in; their harvests in the far-away valleys ungathered; with no prospect even of a bare subsistence, except such as the pity of the impoverished Georgian mountaineers might afford to them. Is it to be wondered at, that within three years, out of about four thousand people, one thousand died?

An account of the sufferings of these unhappy people was published in the English press;[1] and the public compassion was deeply stirred. A movement was set on foot to enable them to leave the land where life was embittered by such cruel conditions. Funds were raised in Great Britain and in the United States; the permission of the Tsar was secured; and great numbers of them emigrated in 1898, first to Cyprus and later to Canada. By the end of 1899, upwards of seven thousand Dukhobors were settled in the north-west provinces of Canada. It is the story of the Pilgrim Fathers over again; the same sufferings, the same dauntless spirit, the same faith in God in launching forth into the mysterious, illimitable Western World in quest of peace and liberty and all that makes life worth living, cruelly denied to them in the land of their birth. Only the transmigration was in this case on an enormously increased scale.

"'Do you think you will be able to get along in your new "home?' inquired an American of one of the newly "arrived Dukhobor men.

"He looked up, and the faith that was in him flashed "in his eyes as he answered—

"'God, who has selected this land for us, where we can

[1] *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, by Vladimir Tchertkoff (*Free Age Press*, Christchurch, Hants); also *The Times* (23rd October 1895).

" worship Him according to the dictates of our consciences, " will certainly not let us starve!'"[1]

Eleven years have passed since their settlement in the Dominion. These Russian moujiks have now settled down into peaceful and industrious citizens. They are prospering greatly. Their houses are clean and comfortable; their children are being well educated; and they give an example to the world of good morals and sincere piety.

The excommunication of Count Tolstoy by the Greek Orthodox Church marks a prominent stage in the advance of the Russian people towards liberty of conscience, because of the famous appeal made by the novelist to the Tsar that he should grant that precious boon to the people.

It was in the early spring of 1901 that Tolstoy brought upon his head the anathema of the Church. By an edict of the Holy Synod, the Count was declared excommunicate. It was charged against him that he had not only taken every opportunity to repudiate the doctrine of the Church, but he had also "used his literary talent, the gift of God, for the purpose of disseminating teachings opposed to Christ and the Church."

Countess Tolstoy was greatly agitated about this decree of excommunication, and immediately wrote an earnest appeal to Pobiedonostzeff, to secure if possible its withdrawal. The Countess, a lady nearly twenty years his junior, has ever been attached to the Greek Orthodox faith, and keenly felt the blow aimed at her husband.

The University students took the opposite view. They rejoiced greatly; for University students throughout

[1] *The Dukhobors*, by J. Elkinton, p. 208.

Russia had long been readers and admirers of Tolstoy. In the city of Kazan, on the upper reaches of the Volga River, five hundred of them marched in procession to the Cathedral to present a petition to the Bishop begging that they also might be excommunicated.

The students' view of the matter was the correct one. Tolstoy was elevated by Pobiedonostzeff, through his excommunication, to the loftiest pedestal he had ever occupied in the attention of Russia; and from that elevation he preached to the Tsar, and to the people, the doctrine of freedom of conscience. "The act of excommunication certainly served the purposes of dissent very thoroughly in showing how widespread among all classes was the discontent with the tyranny of the Orthodox Church."[1]

Tolstoy sent a letter to the Tsar, a most rational letter. Towards the end of it occur the following sentences:—

"Fourthly and lastly, and this is most important—

"It is necessary to abolish all restraint on religious "freedom. It is necessary—

"(*a*) To abolish all those laws according to which any "digression from the Established Church is punished as a "crime;

"(*b*) To allow the opening and organisation of the old "sectarian chapels and churches, and also of the prayer-"houses of Baptists, Molokans, Stundists, and all others;

"(*c*) To allow religious meetings and sermons of all "denominations;

"(*d*) Not to hinder people of various faiths from educat-"ing their children in that faith which they regard as the "true one."

[1] V. E. Marsden in *Fortnightly Review*, June 1905, p. 1021.

These demands he sustains by a variety of arguments—

". . . Religious persecutions not only fail to attain " their object, but produce opposite results—strengthening " that which they are intended to destroy.

". . . The interference of Government in the sphere " of faith produces the . . . worst of vices, hypo- " crisy . . .

". . . Union is in no wise attained by the compulsory " . . . retention of all men in the external profession of " one bond of religious teaching . . . but only by the " free advance of the community towards truth." [1]

All this we steadfastly believe. The world rejoices greatly in the venerable and fearless prophet who so well gave utterance to the demand of the people in their hour of need.

[1] R. E. C. Long in *Review of Reviews*, May 1901, p. 434.

CHAPTER XXIII

How Liberty came at Last

MOST people were astonished when war was declared against Russia by Japan in 1904, and nobody more so than Tsar Nicholas II.[1] Like his father and grandfather, the Emperor is a man of peace. He gave a welcome revelation of this spirit in his Manifesto of 27th August 1898, in which he invited the world-powers to unite in a Conference to consider the question of International Peace. He doubtless hoped that the twentieth century would be an era of universal goodwill and prosperity. How little could he have foreseen that his own armies and navies, ere the first decade of the century had passed, would be involved in one of the most stupendous and sanguinary conflicts of modern times!

These matters have a vital relation to the more domestic events of Russian history that followed, and out of which sprang liberty for the Russian people in matters of religion, as far as that liberty has, up to the present, been granted.

The Manchurian army returned to European Russia, to find that a great change had come to the people of the Empire while they had been absent fighting the Tsar's battles. A dread silence had fallen upon their cities; the faces of the people were filled with apprehension and gloom;

[1] See *National Review*, February 1905, p. 978.

and here and there were heard ominous mutterings of a coming storm. Then the volcanic fires flamed forth in one of the great centres, and in another; insurrection, strikes, massacres, varied now and again by news of the assassination of a statesman here, and a tchinovnik somewhere else.

In every large centre of population, the workmen met in hundreds, sometimes in thousands,[1] to talk eagerly over the burning questions of the hour; and all the world looked towards the palace of the Tsar to learn his latest ukaze of reform or of reaction, whichever it might happen to be.

The public press was infected with the universal fever of revolution. It was ordinary daily gossip in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and other cities, to hear of the suppression of newspapers, the arrest of editors and writers, and of the yet stricter exercise of repression in the offices of the Censor.

Out of all the turmoil of the years immediately succeeding the war, there emerged, little by little, with awful birth-throes of sorrow to multitudes in Russia, the cession of certain popular rights. These were not virile measures of reform, simple, strong, straightforward, and self-reliant, like the masculine laws under which more democratic peoples live their lives; but feeble, apologetic, hesitating admittances to uncertain privileges that will in the view of the granters be grievously abused. The tiny grain of liberty was hidden in bushels and barnsful of the chaff of bureaucratic verbosity. The popular demands included:—

"(1) A Legislature popularly elected; and thus representative of the Russian people.

[1] Prince Trubetzkoy speaks of a mass meeting of 30,000 people! *Out of Chaos*, p. 307.

" (2) Control over the national purse.
" (3) The abolition of the hateful passport system.
" (4) Inviolability of person and of home.
" (5) Freedom of the press and of association.
" (6) Liberty of conscience."

This programme does not appear to be extreme, or revolutionary, but it filled the Russian bureaucracy with alarm.

In the Ukaze of 11th March 1903—a document which gave rise to much jubilation as a most liberal measure, and one making for the freedom of the people, there was no liberty given *to the Russian*, to leave Orthodoxy. Those of non-Orthodox and foreign faiths might live in the profession of their faith. But the Russian Orthodox, and their children, must remain Russian Orthodox to the end of the chapter, under the old severe pains and penalties.

This Ukaze was drafted by M. de Plehve, who within sixteen months afterwards was shattered by a bomb in the streets of St. Petersburg (8th July 1904). He is said to have been the foe of freedom, and the enemy of the people's cause in Russia for twenty years.[1]

The Zemstvos held secret conferences in St. Petersburg and Moscow in the autumn and winter of 1904, and under the guidance of that ardent friend of reform and of the people, Prince Serge Trubetzkoy, a leading professor in the Moscow University, issued a *Petition of Rights* in which among other measures asked for, freedom of conscience was given a prominent position.

The Tsar (*i.e.* the bureaucracy) replied, in a manifesto

[1] See *Out of Chaos*, by Prince Michael Trubetzkoy, p. 309.

issued in the end of December, in which he declared his "determination to act always in accordance with the "revered will of his predecessor . . . our beloved Father, "whose labours it pleased Almighty God in His inscrutable "ways to cut short prematurely; thereby placing upon us "the sacred duty of completing the work begun by him of "strengthening order and truth in the Russian land, as "required by the . . . necessities of public life."

The "strengthening of order and truth in the Russian land" by the policy of sitting upon the safety valve, was so little successful, that from the early days of January 1905 the red blood of revolution began to splash the walls and streets of practically every large city in the Empire.

Massacre of the people by the troops began, by that historic event in the great thoroughfares that led to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. On Sunday, 22nd January (N.S.), headed by the mysterious ex-priest Gapon,[1] who has since disappeared by the hand of the assassin,[2] the working people of the northern city marched, many thousands strong, and unarmed, to present their simple—if extreme—petition to the Tsar, in person.

Five living streams of them, men, women, and children, attired, poor creatures, in their gay Sunday best, flowed like the bores of five tidal-rivers inward, from the outlying factory districts, north, east, south, and west, of the city towards the spacious and stately area of palaces on the Neva quays in the centre. They were Holy Orthodox crowds

[1] See *The Story of my Life*, by Father Gapon (*Strand Magazine*, October 1905).

[2] See *Red Russia*, by J. Foster Fraser, p. 245; also *Russia in Revolution*, by G. H. Perris, p. 307.

too ; for they bore banners of the Church, and sacred *ikons* at the head of their processions.[1]

While yet a great way off from the Winter Palace, they were confronted by formidable lines of infantry, with rifles, and ugly looking bayonets. At sight of the military they paused.

"What went ye out for to see?" Not weapons of butchery, indeed. They went to see their batushka the Tsar, with the kindly smile, and the open hand, and the word of goodwill and peace. They were prepared to fall down and to worship him, the all-powerful, on his appearance before them. His word of paternal greeting would have gone far to heal their grievous troubles.

The crowd advanced innocently. Then the infantry parted in the centre like a curtain, and out from behind them galloped the Cossacks. They dashed down upon the startled people, lashing, with their awful nagaikas, right and left upon the heads and faces of the terrified men and women, who ran for life to the sides of the road to escape being trampled to death. Through the procession the savage horsemen raced; then they rode back and resumed their station behind the screen of infantry.

"We have come to present a petition to the Tsar. We intend no harm!" cried a spokesman, of the people.

"Fire!!" screamed the officer in command.

There was a line of little puffs of smoke from the rifles of the soldiers, and a number of the foremost men and women fell to the ground, amid the cries of the horrified crowd behind.

Then began a massacre in the city of St. Petersburg

[1] See *The Dawn in Russia*, by H. W. Nevinson (who was present as special correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*), p. 12.

COSSACKS CLEARING A STREET.

that has left for all time an indelible stain of disgrace upon the Administration of that day. Whose was the terrible fault it is not ours to inquire.[1] But the birth of freedom in Russia was with blood.

It does not appear that liberty of conscience in religion was made a prominent subject in the petitions of the workmen, to the Tsar, on "Bloody Sunday," or in the demands of the Social Revolutionary, or Social Democratic parties at other times. They were not the class to feel keenly the loss of religious liberty. Their grievances were economic and political. Their religious aspirations, such of them as had any, were satisfied upon the extremely low level of the ordinary church ceremonial.

It is distressing to reflect that in all the vast masses of men, drawn together by the burning enthusiasms of these 1904–6 days, the influence and power of vital religion appear to have been quite a negligible quantity. Of economic theorisings, sometimes tinctured with atheism, and sometimes sodden with it, there was everywhere a superabundance, embittering and envenoming the spirit, in the struggle with the authorities; but of the strength, and patience, and meek persistence, that are learned at the feet of the Lord Jesus, and that always bring victory to their possessors in the end, the great multitude of the people have as yet learned nothing.

Dr. Baedeker on one occasion sat in the kamera of a Siberian prison and chatted with a prisoner who was a typical revolutionary.

"You and I are working for the same end," said he.

[1] The late Grand Duke Vladimir afterwards denied his responsibility. See *National Review*, May 1905, p. 420.

"How do you make that out?" inquired the convict.

"You are desirous that the people shall be free, and so am I," the doctor replied. "You regard human authority as a tyrannical power, so it is, sometimes; but I go further than you——"

The convict laughed aloud at this.

"Yes, it is quite true. I go further than you. There are worse tyrannies than governments and emperors; and I am striving to free the people from these."

"You mean sins, I suppose," said the political. "Are you free yourself?"

"Yes, thank God, I am! 'If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.' 'He that is called in the Lord, is the Lord's freeman.' 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.' And every other slave of sin and death may gain this freedom too—*you* may have it!"

The turbulent revolutionary was interested alike in the speaker and the subject, and listened intently to the venerable apostle of Christ as he explained to him the "truth as it is in Jesus." Dr. Baedeker found the political prisoners to be the least responsive to his message, of all the convicts to whom he carried the Gospel.

Shortly after the St. Petersburg event, there followed the dreadful disturbances in Poland, in which hundreds of persons were injured and many killed, through the reckless use of their weapons by the soldiers, against crowds that were for the most part unarmed.

In the middle of February 1905 the Governor-General of Moscow, the Grand Duke Serge (uncle of the Empress) was blown to pieces as he rode through the streets of the

city towards the Kremlin. This event drew from the Tsar another manifesto, in which vague promises were made to the people, and appeals to their loyalty.

This manifesto granted a degree of religious toleration; but religious discussion was still banned, proselytism forbidden, and the reforms promised were not accompanied by the necessary instructions to the administration to carry them out.

The rise and activity of those disgraceful bodies, the "Black Hundred," in various parts of Russia, are a feature of the times that calls for notice. The "Black Hundred," or *Union of the Russian people* as they preferred to call themselves, were bands of the rowdy and ruffian element in a city, actually organised it is said by the authorities themselves, and aided and abetted in their dreadful operations. They professed to be animated by patriotism, and love for the Tsar and the Government; they were let loose upon those sections of the population that were believed to be inimical to the Russian State. The alien races, all dissenters, and particularly the helpless Jews,[1] were the victims of their fury. When it is borne in mind that upwards of two-thirds of Russia's urban populations are foreigners; and that nearly all the foreigners are — as compared with the non-official Russians—men of substance in more or less degree, merchants, traders, or skilled producers, with something to lose; then when lawless violence prevails, it will be seen what incentives the "Black Hundred" has, and what scope for plunder and murder.

It has been stated with some show of proof that the

[1] See *Red Russia*, by J. Foster Fraser, p. 161 et seq.

Minister of the Interior (M. de Plehve) actually sent a message to the Governor of Kishineff in Bessarabia, prior to the massacre of the Jews in that city, forbidding the police and troops, *in the event of an outbreak of disturbance of the peace* in the city, to use their weapons. A few days after, the "Black Hundred" began their bloody work; and the forces of law and order, disarmed and paralysed by this timely message from St. Petersburg, looked on, until the organised mob had slaughtered inoffensive Jews to satiety, and gorged themselves with the loot! This, alas, was by no means a solitary case.

In the spring of 1905 something definite came forth from the royal palace to gladden the hearts of believers throughout the world. It was sufficiently definite to cause Evangelicalism in the Empire to arise and shake herself from the dust, and to launch forth boldly upon the eager and varied activities that characterise the dissenting bodies of Russia, to this hour. It came in the famous EASTER GIFT, an Imperial Ukaze, dated 17th April 1905, which was followed on 25th June of the same year by a Manifesto, in which were proclaimed, LIBERTY IN MATTERS OF FAITH throughout Russia, and also an amnesty to all those who had been sentenced to imprisonment or sent into exile for religious "offences."

Mr. Carl Joubert sceptically pronounced the Easter Manifesto "a Stock Exchange Ukaze," declaring that it was issued solely with a view to placate the Western nations, and thus facilitate another loan.[1] Four years of history have since happily shown the inaccuracy of this opinion.

During these months the Empire was in the agonising

[1] *The Fall of Tsardom*, by Carl Joubert, p. 248.

throes of a great political revolution; and from all quarters came news of awful happenings. With the cry of the people for an orderly and popular constitutional government, mingled the hoarse screams of men whose lusts could only be satiated with blood and plunder; and the efforts of the authorities to maintain order seemed to have gained an accession of savagery in the wild excitements of the times.

"Fire and sword turned whole cities into battlefields "filling streets with corpses and ruins . . ." (said Dr. Dillon, in his admirable article on the situation). "Men were "burned alive by the hundred in Tomsk; women were "cruelly tortured in Odessa . . . and there were more men, "women, and children killed in that one city in the course "of a single week, than in all France during the great "Revolution."[1]

Then came the famous general strike. About a million of workers came out. "All traffic on the railways" . . . (said Prince Kropotkin) "was stopped; and the mountains of provisions, which in the usual course reach Moscow every day, were lying rotting along the railway lines."[2] It was the same with other cities. There was no postal delivery; there were no newspapers, no produce of any kind. "Shop assistants, clerks, teachers, actors, lawyers, chemists, nay, even judges, gradually joined the strikers. A whole country had struck against its government; all but the troops."[3]

Finally, on Monday, 30th October, the Tsar took the step for which his many millions of subjects were waiting.

[1] *Contemporary Review*, December 1905, p. 888.
[2] *The Nineteenth Century*, December 1905, p. 874.
[3] *Ibid.*

"Count Witte and the Court Minister, Baron Fredericks, "stood with His Majesty in one apartment where there was "a table with writing materials, and the text of the Mani- "festo. In the next room stood the members of the suite, "downcast, silent, but observant.

"'I sign the Manifesto with pleasure,' said the Tsar, "'because I now believe it will promote the welfare of "my people. . . . If hitherto I have upheld the Auto- "cracy and its prerogatives, it was because I was "assured they were essential to the welfare of the nation, "and I believed it. . . . I am happy now to think that "I am helping the nation to happiness and prosperity.'

"The Tsar then slowly made the sign of the cross. ". . . Deathless silence reigned in both apartments. "Without haste or hesitation, without a tinge of deeper "colour in his face, the Emperor took a pen . . . and de- "liberately wrote the word 'Nikolai.' . . . He had ceased "to be an Autocrat. The Russian people were free. Witte, "losing his self-control, wept like a child; members of the "suite . . . sobbed aloud; but Nicholas II. walked out "of the room with perfect dignity and composure."[1]

The Manifesto expressed his determination—

"(1) To grant the population the immutable foundations "of civic liberty, based on real inviolability of the person "and freedom of conscience, speech, union, and association;

"(2) To give electoral rights to those classes now "deprived of them; and

"(3) To establish as an immutable rule that no law can "come into force without the approval of the State Duma."[2]

[1] *The Contemporary Review*, December 1905, p. 888.
[2] *The Nineteenth Century*, December 1905, p. 875.

THE EX-PREMIER, M. DE WITTE.

The publication of this Manifesto was naturally followed by the resignation of the Ober-Procurator. It was clearly more than the venerable tyrant could endure. The Empire breathed more freely when the wires conveyed to every corner of it the welcome news that Pobiedonostzeff's day was ended. Even the Orthodox Church had groaned under his domination.

On 1st November, the Finns regained their lost liberties by a stroke of the Tsar's pen; and in the "land of a thousand lakes" there were great celebrations.

The Duma met for the first time with much outward show of dignity in January 1906. It was appointed to sit for five years. Its subsequent fate is a familiar story; and the fate of its successor.

It must ever be borne in mind that the power that can make, can unmake; particularly when that power controls the army, and holds the purse. The Tsar remains, notwithstanding all Manifestos, the supreme power (in the last resort) in Russia.

Liberty of conscience therefore, as everything else, may be legal to-day; there is no assurance possible of its permanence. The popular vote in Great Britain is an uncertain quantity, and great issues hang upon its casting. Still more tremendous are the issues that hang upon the opinions of one solitary voter in St. Petersburg; for upon his sole vote depend the destinies for good or for evil of a hundred and forty millions of people. May God guide him aright! Most of his predecessors made terrible mistakes.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Present Evangelical Advance

EVENTS have moved in Russia with startling and tragic rapidity of late years. About twenty years ago *Stepniak*, with the prescience of a seer, called the attention of the world to the trend of events in his native land. His forecasts are being fulfilled. His words, from the point of view of an unbeliever, are a remarkable testimony—

"The fervent genius of religion stifled heretofore under the blankets of Orthodox ritualism may awaken. When the religious element steps to the front, it will not do so under the auspices of Orthodoxy—this is certain."[1]

"It is beyond doubt that the genuine and earnest development of religious thoughts and feelings, which we are witnessing among our masses, will play an important part in our nation's near future."[2]

The Empire to-day is like an apple tree covered with blossom in the spring. The possibilities and promise of spiritual fruitage are superabundant and most attractive.

Will the favourable conditions continue? Or will there come withering winds and nipping frosts? Who can tell? A friend in St. Petersburg said to the writer recently, "The authorities are only tolerating the Evangelicals

[1] *Russian Peasantry*, p. 336. [2] *Ibid.* p. 122.

because they have at present their hands quite full with the revolutionaries. When they have suppressed the latter, the turn of the Evangelicals will come again!"[1]

Over against this pessimistic forecast may be put the confident assurance of M. Witte, the ex-Premier, who has declared that the Government can never go back upon its concession of liberty of conscience to the Russian people. This is the view most generally held by the well-informed people whose opinions one has been able to gather, including several leading members of the present States Duma, who are also devoted sons of the Orthodox Church.

If we could take our stand in the heart of Moscow, upon one of the towers of its ancient fortress-palace-temple, the Kremlin, and look from that central point over the wide expanse of forest and steppe, and view the spiritual condition of the Tsar's dominions, we should find ourselves girdled with a far-away circle of Gospel light. The lights glimmer only out in the far, far distance on every side. The centre lies in comparative darkness.

There are many Protestant Evangelical churches away in the Baltic Provinces in the north-west; Christ is preached in Poland in the west, and with no small measure of blessing; on the steppes of the south-west and southern provinces there is also considerable knowledge of the Word of God; among the babel races and tongues of the Caucasus in the south-east, and here and there along the Volga, there are numerous little communities of believers; and away in Siberia in the far east, the Gospel truth is known in power to some extent. It is only in the forest

[1] See Appendix C.

regions of the centre, in Great Russia itself, that the light burns with a scarcely perceptible glimmer.

This state of things is owing chiefly to two causes. First, it has always been the policy of the Holy Synod to banish the "Sectarians" to the far limits of the Empire. "Let them be thrust out as far away from the heart of the holy Orthodox as possible," has been the decree. To the uttermost fringes of the Empire then, first the Ukraine, and afterwards Poland, Caucasia and Siberia, the "Sectarians" spread themselves, and there, as far as they saw opportunity, diligently spread their doctrines, which, in these distant parts, found congenial soil, and grew and flourished.

The second cause is to be found in the surprising intellectual vigour and capacity of the non-Orthodox races, whose lands lie out upon the Russian borders.

The western nations have not been slow to render sympathetic aid to this modern Evangelical advance. The foremost position must be accorded to *Germany* who, as a close neighbour, has sent some of the bravest of her sons across the border (as has been seen in earlier chapters) to evangelise in Poland, and the Baltic Provinces. *Sweden* has followed her example in this. The *United States of America* has manifested much practical sympathy with the Baptist movements of the Baltic Provinces and of South Russia. And *Great Britain* has lent her aid from time to time in a variety of ways, which in the next chapter shall be briefly reviewed.

Thus the foremost nations of the earth are eagerly stretching out hands of affectionate brotherly greeting and help, to that young spiritual movement in the Russian Empire that must become so fruitful of blessing to the subjects of the Tsar.

CHAPTER XXV

Evangelical Agencies at Work

THE story of the *British and Foreign Bible Society's* work in Russia is inextricably and heroically interwoven with the history of the progress of Evangelical truth in that Empire. The agents and colporteurs of this Society have ever been to the fore in the efforts to spread the Redeemer's Kingdom amid obstacles that would have daunted the hearts of men of feebler faith; and in their sufferings, too, for the cause of God and truth.

In the convict-gangs, marching in their chains to Siberia or Gerussi or Orenburg, have been found men who have laboured in connection with this Society as colporteurs. They have suffered in the performance of their duties the utmost privations of hunger, cold, and nakedness. They have journeyed across endless snow-plains, and travelled along the course of frozen rivers and through dense and lonely forests to visit an obscure collection of impoverished huts with the precious Word of Life. They have endured the rebuffs and jeering insults of revolutionary workmen in factory yards in St. Petersburg, and have fallen victims to prowling hordes of Kurdish robbers in the vast and wild mountain passes of Transcaucasia. Their record is with God, though their names were never known in the world

of Western Christendom; and if men sing not their praises on earth, they themselves chant *His* praises in heaven.

In 1564 the Acts of the Apostles was issued by the Russian press—the first portion of the Bible to be printed in the country.[1] Since then, with many hindrances, the Scriptures have been produced and circulated. The British and Foreign Bible Society purchase all their supplies from the presses of the Holy Synod, which has the monopoly of production, and thus retains the right of saying what version shall be issued.

Dr. Kean of St. Petersburg issued, in the centenary year of the Society's history, an interesting little brochure,[2] which tells in outline the story of the Society's efforts in the Empire.

Dr. Baedeker found in this Society a valuable helper in his efforts for Christ in Russia; and throughout his life spoke appreciatively of its work.

In these more recent years the task of the Society in Russia has become much more arduous, owing, we regret to say, to an increasing spirit of intense hostility to religion, but chiefly owing to the extreme poverty of the people. When the Russian moujik has paid his taxes, to say nothing of his debts, there is too often little left for food; and books, even the best of books, are a luxury as unattainable as the priceless jewelled cups in the Treasury of the Moscow Kremlin.

The Greek Orthodox Church, too, has its own Bible Society whose colporteurs tramp the country, and doubtless

[1] *History of the Eastern Church*, by A. P. Stanley, p. 347.

[2] *The Bible in Russia*, by Dr. Kean, British and Foreign Bible Society.

THE PREMIER, M. STOLYPIN.

do a considerable amount of good; for "the entrance of Thy Word giveth light."

The *Evangelical Alliance* has an important sphere; its aim and policy—as its name indicates—being rather to promote fraternal union among existing churches and workers, than to engage in independent operations.

For many years the council of the Alliance has rendered valuable help to Gospel work in Russia. It was the arm of the Alliance that was stretched out to keep above water the heads of the Stundists, when for years they were reduced to destitution by the floods of persecution, into which they were driven by Pobiedonostzeff and his agents. Dr. Baedeker was privileged to be the bearer of many a generous sum of money to the starving exiles, from the funds of the Alliance; and in other ways, such as by promoting sympathy for the sufferers among the home churches, and by petitions to the Russian authorities to render their lot less terrible, did the Alliance prove a friend in need to these afflicted children of God.

More recently the Alliance has given pecuniary assistance to the "*Bible School*," a college in Berlin that exists for the purpose of training students to act as pastors and evangelists in various parts of Europe. One can scarcely imagine a more fruitful method of helping forward the cause of God, in lands where Gospel privileges are scant, than this.

The *Berlin Bible School* sprang out of the work of Fraülein von Blücher.[1] Brethren Christoph Kochler (formerly a Lutheran pastor) and Johannes Warns are in charge of the studies. There are now about twenty-five students, of whom twelve are Russian. The entire enter-

[1] See *Dr. Baedeker in Russia*, pp. 29, 30.

prise is a work of faith in God; and He has not only opened the hearts of His stewards to provide for its maintenance, but has also greatly blessed its operations.

Russian students after training return to their own country to labour for the Lord. One young brother, who has recently returned to Dorpat, sends word that he works at his trade as a shoemaker for his livelihood, and preaches the Gospel on Sundays, and other times, as he finds opportunity. Is he not in this more truly apostolic than if he held high ecclesiastical dignity?

There has recently been formed in St. Petersburg a Russian Evangelical Union, under the direction of our highly esteemed brother, Mr. I. S. Prokhanoff, editor of the Russian paper *The Christian*, of whom, if God spare his life, we shall doubtless hear more.

The *Brethren* have for many years had a footing in the Empire; but their activities have been so intertwined and fused with those of the Baptists, that it has been almost impossible hitherto to define their boundaries. The lines of demarcation, so conspicuous between the denominations of Western Christendom, are not clearly drawn in Russia.

Said Mr. Prelooker to a young fellow, an isvoschic (droshky driver) of Nicholajeff near Odessa, who had come to invite him to a "Sectarian" meeting—

"What are you? What sect do you belong to?"

"Oh," he replied, "we all belong to Christ!"

And no amount of questioning could move him from that position.

In St. Petersburg the *Brethren* meet for the "breaking of bread" in several parts of the city every Sunday morning, and they are at present carrying on an active Christian work.

"In places where, not long since, meetings for prayer and the reading of the Word were held with every precaution against discovery, now notice-boards are hung out to invite the public to regular meetings," says Mr. E. H. Broadbent.[1]

The same evangelist calls attention to the awakening among the German Mennonite colonies in the South: "aroused suddenly from a century of quiet isolation from their Russian neighbours, to find themselves missionaries among an inquiring people, with such an opportunity of serving the Lord in the Gospel as is seldom found. They live here, have the language, know the people, and have been brought up in the knowledge of the Word. Now that liberty is given, they may well be encouraged to go forward like Joshua, and possess the land."[2]

In a recent letter Mr. Broadbent says of the South Russian provinces: "There is such a receptivity for good or evil here, as probably exists nowhere else in the world. It is not possible to meet the needs of the multitudes who zealously desire to hear the Word. In all places where the Gospel is preached there are conversions. The field is vast, the opportunities remarkable. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate their importance. None can tell how long this condition of things may last. A brother and his wife, known to me, have lately been murdered, under circumstances of incredible barbarity; but their dying faith was the means of leading some souls from death unto life."

Mr. Broadbent has just undertaken a long and arduous pioneering journey into Turkestan as the messenger of the

[1] *Echoes of Service*, March 1907, p. 92.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 93.

Cross. It is deeply interesting to hear from him of little scattered communities of believers in Aschabad and Merv, Samarcand, Bokhara, and Tashkent—points of light in the great darkness of these remote dominions of the Tsar. Armenian Christians are here the handful of seed-corn scattered upon the wild mountains of Central Asia. May God give a harvest that shall shake like Lebanon!

The *Evangelical Christians of Sweden*, in the year 1903 formed a committee from the different religious denominations in the country, to co-operate in mission work in Russia. Mr. N. F. Höijer, who had been engaged more or less in evangelising in Russia for over twenty years, was appointed as their pioneer-missionary. Their idea was the establishment of one National Evangelical Free Church in Russia.

This Swedish Society has lent the strength of its support to the new Molokan movement in South Russia, which under the name of "Evangelical Christians" has enjoyed a season of revival and ingathering in recent years. Some information has already been given respecting this movement in the chapter on the Molokans. In the cities of Kharkov and Moscow there are churches belonging to this body of Christians; and these have recently begun Sunday-school and other pioneering work for the Lord. The Astrakhanka Molokan Conference supports about ten evangelists who move about among the Molokan and Mennonite colonies of South Russia, and whose itineration has hitherto been followed with much blessing. The great question of the education of the children, too, is one that is receiving their earnest attention.

A new and important development has taken place in

St. Petersburg under the fostering aid of the London *Pioneer Mission.* Pastor Wilhelm Fetler, a Lett, who has received a four years' theological training in the Pastors' College, London, and who is now the pastor of the Lettish Baptist Church in St. Petersburg, is preaching the Gospel freely and openly to the Russians, and has formed a Russian Baptist Church in the city. Without doubt he has the necessary gifts for the important work of an evangelist, and his labours have been hitherto most successful. The work is, however, much hindered by the lack of a suitable building in which to hold the services. Mr. Fetler has worked to some extent in conjunction with the veteran, Mr. Kargel, now of the "Evangelical Christians," and with Mr. Arndt, pastor of the German Baptist Church. The meetings held in various quarters of the city have attracted large crowds of people. The St. Petersburg press has given long and appreciative notices in their columns. The authorities, too, regard the movement with indulgence. The great hall of the City Duma has on several occasions been placed at the disposal of Pastor Fetler. The outlook is most hopeful. Who will build him a hall?

The *British Evangelical Continental Society*, which is for all practical purposes a branch of the L.M.S., in conjunction with the *American Board of Foreign Missions* has a very successful work in Lodz under the pastoral care of a young Bohemian, Mr. Prochanza.

The *Methodist Episcopal Church* of the United States of America began work in St. Petersburg in the summer of 1907, an extension of their operations in Finland.

The *Continental Mission of the London Sunday School Union* has for several years been labouring on the western

borderland of Russia, and in the Baltic Provinces. The work is now extending to St. Petersburg, Moscow, and other cities.

The above organisations have hitherto laboured under the serious disadvantage caused by the absence of any Evangelical religious literature in the Empire. This matter is now being taken in hand by Brethren Prokhanoff, Fetler, and others; and the people are being supplied in an increasing measure with spiritual guidance in their own tongue. As there are a great many languages and dialects spoken in the Tsar's dominions, the field to be covered is immense.

The *Student Christian Movement* has not overlooked Russia; and encouraging results have followed meetings promoted by this organisation in the university cities of the Empire, particularly in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

The long and happy association of the *Society of Friends* with the progress of spiritual enlightenment and religious liberty in Russia, may be referred to. Movements have, at different periods, originated in the Empire that have developed features akin to the English revival associated with the personality of George Fox; and such movements have naturally attracted attention and sympathy.

The various sects of mystics that sprang from the great schism of the Raskolniks or Old Believers, and later, the Dukhobortsi, and the Molokani, have exhibited a family likeness to the Friends; but there are points of difference in each case. These have, however, found generous helpers among the Friends in Great Britain.

The Jews of Russia are, as in all other lands, a race apart. They number upwards of five millions and are for

the most part confined to the pale of settlement which has already been described. Centuries of oppression have embittered them against the Christian name, and great numbers of Russian Jews to-day have fallen a prey to atheistic and revolutionary teachings. Singularly enough, Christian workers find among these, at the present time the most promising material for Evangelistic propaganda.

The *Mildmay Mission to the Jews*, which began its work in Wilna in 1887, has been very successful,[1] as have other similar Evangelical agencies. The awful storm of persecution in which so many of Jewish race were massacred by the Russian "Black Hundred," gave opportunity to the evangelists to exercise Christian compassion and generosity to their plundered, wounded, and bereaved Jewish neighbours. Thus many hearts were opened to receive the Divine message of the Gospel. In Lodz and Warsaw, in Odessa and Rostov on the Don, and Feodosia (Crimea), a wave of revival has gladdened the hearts of the missionaries, and many of the Hebrew converts have themselves become, like Saul of Tarsus, heralds of the Cross.

It must be borne in mind that in the direct path of Evangelical activity, lies the ancient obstacle of the prohibition of proselytising. No one is yet at liberty to "convert" a Russian citizen, except to Greek Orthodoxy, under severe penalties. Nor may religious meetings be held, except under licences granted locally.

The edict of religious liberty did not touch these disabilities. Whether the Duma will succeed in removing them remains to be seen.

[1] *In the Land of the North*, by S. H. Wilkinson, p. 92.

CHAPTER XXVI

"The Morning Cometh"

THE one purpose of this volume has been to put English-speaking people into possession of the great facts—with particular instances—of the progress of the Evangelical movement in the mighty Russian Empire within the last fifty years, and its strength and prospects at the present hour. It only remains to beg of the reader that he will give the Russian monarch and the Russian people a place in his sympathies and prayers.

We recall the Tsar as he appeared on the morning of his Coronation in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow; "the fair-haired boy . . . with blonde and silken beard." Immediately after he had, with his own hands, placed the crowns of the Empire upon his own head, and upon the head of the Tsarina, he presented to heaven the following prayer:—

"Thou, my Lord and God, instruct me in the work for "which Thou hast sent me. Enlighten my path, and direct "me in this great ministry. . . . Let my heart be in Thy "hand, that I may order everything to the advantage of the "people intrusted to me, and to Thy glory; so that even "on the Day of Judgment I may without condemnation "render my account to Thee . . ."[1]

[1] *In Joyful Russia*, by J. A. Logan, Junr., p. 128.

"The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet." Princes and emperors are under His sway, equally with their humblest subjects. He is "KING of kings and LORD of lords." "By ME kings reign, and princes decree justice."

How vast are the territories of the Tsar! At the same time, how minute is the planet upon the surface of which these territories lie, in the sight of Him whose will the hosts of heaven obey!

How great, to our thinking, are the authority and the magnificence of this powerful autocrat! At the same time, what a brief span is his life, and how dim its splendour, in the sublime presence of the Everlasting Lord!

Our glory lies in the dust. What are we that we should boast ourselves of to-morrow, or even of to-day? Looking up to the Infinite Father of us all, we learn the lesson of humility.

Count Leo Tolstoy has given us a thrilling picture of one of the officers of Napoleon, a man whose admiration for his great chief, and devotion to Napoleon's ambitious schemes of world-conquest, were as the light of his life. This officer had lain the night through, wounded, upon the field of battle where he had fallen—his filming eyes searching wonderingly among the multitude of God's stars in the darkened heavens. In the morning, Napoleon with his staff rode past, and reined in his horse to speak to his dying follower. How the great man had shrunk in importance! How inconsequential he appeared; an evanescent atom of flesh and blood, by contrast with the tremendous problems of the universe and of destiny that

had the night through filled the soul of his erstwhile infatuated worshipper.

But although the Kingdom of God is of vastly greater concern than the transient glamour of human monarchies, these being included in the Divine purposes, are yet of interest and importance to us. We hear afar the roll of a grand anthem: "The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ;" and our eyes eagerly welcome the earliest signs of it. We watch for the dawn, and the first fiery splendours on the mountain peaks. And it is coming! Look away Eastward. Russia is emerging slowly but surely from the shadows. The far Yabloni mountains, the long line of the Urals, and the crags of Elbruz and Kasbek are tipped with the first touch of the coming day! "HE SHALL REIGN!"

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A 1

Sir A. Mackenzie Wallace quotes from a secret report made by M. Melnikoff to the Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaievitch, as follows :—

" Is it possible for the people to respect the clergy when " they hear how one priest stole money from below the " pillow of a dying man at the moment of confession ; how " another was publicly dragged out of a house of ill fame ; " how a third christened a dog ; how a fourth, while offici- " ating at an Easter service, was dragged by the hair from " the altar by the deacon? Is it possible for the people " to respect priests who spend their time in gin shops, . . . " fight with the cross in their hands, and abuse each other " in bad language at the altar? . . . One might fill several " pages with examples of this kind, without overstepping " the boundaries of the province of Nijni Novgorod. . . ."

The author in a commendable spirit of charity adds—

" The reader must not, however, imagine that *all* Russian " priests are of the kind above referred to. Many of them " are honest, respectable, well-intentioned men, who con- " scientiously fulfil their humble duties."—*Russia*, by Sir A. Mackenzie Wallace, vol. i. p. 75.

APPENDIX A 2

" Priests who persuade their congregations to pay for " the celebration of a special Church service to induce the " Almighty to dispense with eclipses, and who allow them- " selves for a moderate consideration to be dragged across a " turnip-field in order thereby to touch the Divine heart that " He may deign to make the turnips big and round, can " scarcely claim to be considered the highest type of spiritual " advisers."—*Russian Characteristics*, by E. B. Lanin, p. 23.

" Formerly, the priests were at all events not atheists. " The priests of the Dmitry Tolstoy School do not trouble " about believing in God. This new type of hypocritical " bigots has for its sole aim the creation of a future for " itself ; is to the peasants the keenest, the most insatiable, " the most pitiless of plunderers."—*Russia, Political and*

Social, by L. Tikhomirof (translated from the French by Edward Aveling, D.Sc.), vol. i. p. 222.

APPENDIX A 3

A petition was prepared by the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and a meeting of the higher clergy of the city, in 1905, for presentation to the Tsar. The following extracts from this document vividly illuminate the subject of the status of the parish pope in Russia, his relations with his parishioners, and his influence upon the religious life of the people:—

". . . Both the ecclesiastical and the secular press remark " with equal emphasis upon the prevailing lukewarmness of " the inner life of the Church: upon the alienation of the " flock . . . from its spiritual guides . . . the lack of pas- " toral activity on the part of the clergy, who in the majority " of instances confine themselves to the conduct of Divine " service, and the fulfilment of ritual observances. . . .

". . . All the religious duties of members of the " Orthodox Church were strictly regulated (by the Synod). " . . . It was laid down exactly how one should comport one- " self in church . . . what attitude one should take before " the sacred pictures, how one should spend festival days, go " to confession, and see that the members of the Orthodox " Church remained loyal to their faith. These efforts to sub- " ject to police prescription the facts and phenomena of " spiritual life . . . undoubtedly brought into the ecclesias- " tical sphere the mortifying breath of dry bureaucratism.

" The chief aim of the ecclesiastical reforms of Peter the " Great was to reduce the Church to the level of a mere " government institution pursuing purely political ends. " And as a matter of fact the government of the Church " (under the Holy Synod) speedily became merely one of the " numerous wheels of the complicated government machine.

". . . Regarding the Church merely as a component part " of the State mechanism, Peter decided to set its servants to " perform purely civil duties; and to the great misfortune of " the parish clergy he imposed upon it police and detective " work. . . . The priest was obliged to see that the number " of persons subject to taxation was properly indicated, and " in addition to report without delay all actions revealed to " him in confession that tended to the injury of the State.

" Thus transformed from a spiritual guide into an agent of " police supervision, the pastor entirely lost the confidence " of his flock, and all moral union with them. . . .

" . . . A monthly stipend of from fifteen to twenty roubles " (equal to thirty shillings or two pounds) . . . is not " sufficient for the maintenance of a priest, even if he grows " his own corn; and he is accordingly compelled to levy " upon the parish a number of obligatory contributions in " connection with the celebration of the sacraments, and " of certain ritual acts. This has a painful effect upon the " mutual relations between the pastor and his flock. In " the soul of the priest monetary calculations awaken at " the most unsuitable moment, a consciousness of pastoral " impotence; this compulsory trafficking in holy things " withdraws from him every support needed for practical " activity. *The parishioners*, who are by no means always " capable of appreciating the degree of material need in " which their pastor lives, find occasion in such extortions to " *class the priest with extortioners and vampires.* . . . Thus " the clergy find it difficult to rise above the level of merely " professional performance of ritual acts, and to become the " true pastors of the people. For the people, on the other " hand, it is difficult to rally around the priest. . . .

" The first condition is . . . discover means . . . to " absolve the priest from the necessity of trafficking with " his parishioners on the occasions of the celebrations of a " sacrament."[1]

APPENDIX B

Dr. E. J. Dillon, in the *National Review*, May 1905, p. 536, has given details of the recent case of the pope Tsvetkoff of the Province of Tambov in South Russia, an enlightened and conscientious servant of the Greek Orthodox Church and of the inhabitants of his parish. This man actually dared to write to Pobiedonostzeff, suggesting that an Œcumenical Council should be called to consider and reform the abuses within the Church.

Pobiedonostzeff's reply was the issue of an order for Tsvetkoff's removal from his parish, and incarceration in the dismal monastery-prison of Suzdal in the Province of

[1] See the document in its entirety, as reprinted in *Contemporary Review*, May 1905, p. 716.

Vladimir. Instructions were also sent to the commander of this fortress-monastery to treat him with severity. This official was a semi-military semi-ecclesiastical individual, an abbot of the monastery, and a colonel of artillery, named Seraphim.

"So you have been singing, up to now?" said he, as he welcomed his prisoner at the fortress gates. "Well, henceforward you will have to dance!"

The pope was ushered into a dark, mildewed cell. "A horrible feeling crept over me, when this grave opened to receive me. It became more awful still, when I began to realise where I was. I occupied a cell between two men *who were stark mad*! There was a little aperture in each door, and from time to time one or other of my neighbours would approach this opening, and scream at the top of his voice. His ravings would be interlarded with horrible curses wreaked upon my head, the head of an impious heretic. Even now I shudder when I call them to mind. The soldiers on guard outside would gaze at me intently through the aperture, but none showed any pity. I used to speak to them, to ask a question, or to beg them to speak a few words to me; but then the eye would vanish for a time, and appear soon after, again to torture me by its silent continuous watching. . . .

"At last I discovered, from scraps of conversation among the soldiers outside, that they took me for a madman. That was probably what they had been told. That discovery nearly unhinged my reason. When living outside, I had often been threatened with imprisonment in Suzdal monastery-prison; but I had never realised that in that fortress there were veritable graves for the living. Now I knew it, and shuddered. I was buried alive! . . .

"The casements of the fortress are dreadful stone cages. When I had spent a few hours in mine, I thought I could not remain another month there, and survive. But weeks passed, and many months. And day after day I had the same feeling, that I might break down at any moment, and that I must break down very soon. In this way a twelve-month passed, and then another. I feared my reason was going. I was becoming desperate, and I took a desperate resolution after I had been about two years and a half in that miserable den.

"I wrote to Abbot Seraphim . . . I informed him that unless I were shortly tried, or set free, I would abstain from food, and die of hunger. To that letter I received no answer. I waited, but Abbot Seraphim made no sign. It was as though he were leagues away. Then I set about fulfilling my resolution. On 13th November 1903, I resolved to eat no more. Thenceforth, the food which was brought to my cell remained untasted. My strength began to ebb, and soon failed. I ceased to move about. Languor and dreaminess came over me, and then the burning pangs of thirst. Hunger was terrible; but thirst was maddening. My tongue dried up, my lips were parched, and I thought I could see madness as a spectre. It was prolonged agonising torture. Then I pulled myself together, got up, and walked as well as I could to the end of the cell, and reached up to the window, where, owing to the cold and dampness, icicles were hanging down. I managed to break off some, and quenched my thirst with them. I knew a day would come when exhaustion would keep me lying down, and I should have no icicles to quench the fire in my vitals . . ."

Abbot Seraphim, becoming alarmed by the condition of his prisoner, telegraphed to the Most Holy Governing Synod for further instructions; and, assuming that he would receive a humane reply, he had Tsvetkoff carried out of the fortress, and placed in the cell of an ordinary monk.

Here he was carefully fed and nursed. For two days no reply came to the abbot's telegram. On 4th December 1903, the Most Holy Synod (*i.e.* Pobiedonostzeff) sent the following reply:—

"The priest Tsvetkoff is to be again put back in the pri-
" soners' section; and if he dies of hunger, the Most Holy
" Synod is to be immediately informed; so that measures
" may be taken on its behalf relating to the funeral."

Tsvetkoff says that even the abbot was staggered by this callous order, and he at once expressed his determination to write again to St. Petersburg on the subject. Meanwhile the prisoner was removed to his horrible prison, and after writing out his will, for he was the father of a large family, he settled himself down once more to the death by slow starvation from which he had so recently been

snatched. Nine days later came an order from the Most Holy Synod ordering his release from the madhouse cell; he was, however, to be detained in the monastery. Seraphim's pleadings on his behalf had been successful. The last that we know of him was that he was still a prisoner.

APPENDIX C

The following is a copy of a manifesto issued in 1908 by Antonius, the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of St. Petersburg:—

The Orthodox Church is a divine institution.

We teach that salvation can only be obtained while abiding in fellowship with the Church. By fellowship, we understand general prayer, Church charity, the sacraments, all one's activity sanctioned by the Church, good works done in the name of Christ and the Church, and not in one's own.

We agree that it is possible, though abiding outwardly in the Church, to be a weak member of the Orthodox Church, but it is perfectly certain that a man who separates himself from the Church breaks his fellowship with her, ceases to be one with her in spirit. Separating himself from the Church, a man separates himself from Christ.

Thus teacheth the Orthodox faith. Except of the Church, the grace of Christ does not exist.

Therefore, when the Orthodox Church speaks of enemies of the Church, her meaning is plain. Enemies of the Orthodox Church are all those who profess any other religion, who deny that the Orthodox Church is the only true source of the grace of Christ.

Enemies of the Orthodox Church are all those belonging to any other denomination, Raskolniks, Sectarians, Masons, the Godless and so on.

To leave the Orthodox Church, and be in enmity with her is the greatest sin; for which there is no justification. No sin or failure of the clergy can serve as an excuse for apostasy. These must be warned and fought against while still remaining in the Church. But if any, in fighting against the evils existing in the Church reaches so far as to fall away from the Church himself, he only proves by this, that he is far worse than those whom he has been trying to convict of sin.

30
A

RUSSIA
IN EUROPE
showing places mentioned in
UNDER THREE TSARS
ARCTIC OCEAN
LAPLAND
FINLAND
WHITE SEA
ARCHANGEL
Archangel
R. Dwina
R. Petchora
R. Obi
URAL MTNS
VOLOGDA
ESTHONIA
St Petersburg
NOVGOROD
PROVINCES
Dorpat
LIVONIA
Riga
BALTIC SEA
BALTIC
COURLAND
R. Dwina
Polotsk
KOVNO
Vilna
VALDAI HILLS
TVER
VLADIMIR
Vladimir
Moscow
R. Volga
Nijni Novgorod
Kasan
VIATKA
PERM
Perm
URAL PROVS
KASAN
Kaluga
TULA
Tula
Samara
VOLGA PROVS
Orenburg
Warsaw
POLAND
Lodz
MINSK
TAMBOV
Kolossna
Volsk
Saratov
R. Volga
KURSK
Lipetsk
R. Ural
Kieff
POLTAVA
KHARKOFF
Kharkoff
Stenistrovski
Soradin
Sarepta
DON COSSACKS
R. Don
Rostov
Bastranka
ASTRAKHAN
Astrakhan
Elizabetgrad
Alt Danzig
KHERSONE
KATERINOSLAV
Astrakhanka
R. Dniester
Kichineff
Lubomirka
Bunoka
Khersonn
BESSARABIA
CRIMEA
Tambouka
CAUCASIA
Mt Elbrus
Vladikaukas
Kaffas
GEORGIA
Kars
Erivan
Elizabetpol
Shemacha
Geruesi
ARMENIA
BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA

INDEX

"Administrative orders," 104–5, 148, 183.
Advent, second, 182.
Afonin, the exile, 191.
Aksakoff, M., journalist, 129.
Alexis, Tsar, 28.
Alf, G. F., evangelist, 78, 107, 114.
Allowance to exiles, government, 154.
Alt Danzig, 67.
Ambrose, Archbishop, 101.
American Church, 73.
Anti-religious movement, 110, 112, 113, 209, 219, 220, 227.
Antisemitism (see Jews).
Antonius, Bishop, manifesto of, 236.
Apocrypha, the, 181.
Archangel, 35, 194.
Arctic tribes, 164.
Argument, conversion by, 166.
Armenians, 7, 52, 146, 224.
Army, Russian, 44, 47, 170, 215.
Arndt, Pastor F., 103, 107, 225.
Art, Russian, by A. Maskell, 16.
Artal, the, 9.
Asia, Central, 224.
Assassination, policy of, 120.
Astrachan, 39.
Astrakhanka, 41, 191, 224.
Auricular confession, 179.
Authority in matters of faith, 178.

Babienko, story of exile, 155.
Baedeker, Dr., 40, 69, 75, 109, 153, 162, 209, 220, 221.
Baku, 142.
Balkan policy, Russia's, 6.
Baltic Provinces, 7, 94, 103, 119, 130, 173, 217, 218, 226.
Baptism of children, 162, 174, 197.
Baptisms, 80, 84, 98, 103, 106, 158.
Baptists, 17, 56, 57, 94–109, 123, 124, 140, 154, 181, 184, 188, 225.
Baptist Union of Great Britain, 95.
Basil of Moscow, 27.
Bastanka, 68.
Behind the Scenes in the Country of the Tsar, by B. von Sydakoff, 72.
Berlin Baptist Congress, 59.
Berlin Bible School, 221.
Bessoka, 59.
Bezpopovtsi, 31.
Bible, circulation of, 37, 80, 92, 159, 219.
Bible, committing to memory, 39, 83, 87.
Bible, ignorance of, 111, 117, 169, 179.
Bible in Russia, the, by Dr. Kean, 220.
Bible, love for, 38, 62, 65, 117.
Bible, obedience to, 98, 104, 106, 181, 191.
Bible, reading, 36, 48, 57, 62–4, 68, 72, 88, 115, 116, 156, 168, 184, 197, 223.
"Bible Society, British and Foreign," 44, 48, 54, 147, 159, 219.
Bishop of Kazan, 202.
Bishops of Kherson, 15, 170.
Bishops, false, 173.

Bishops, true, 105, 222.
"Black Hundred, the," 211, 212, 227.
Blackmail, 144–146.
Black Partition, 120.
Black Sea, the, 152, 198.
"Bloody Sunday," 209.
Bobrinsky, Count, 74.
Bogomoltzy (see Pilgrims).
Boots, of exiles, 151.
Borderland of Tsar and Kaiser, by P. Bigelow, 130, 131.
Brandt, Dr., 131.
Brandtmann, preacher, 86.
Brauer, Pastor F., 108.
"Breaking of bread," 109, 222.
"Brethren," 109, 222.
Broadbent, Mr. E. H., 109, 223.
Bureaucracy, the, 111, 120, 206, 232.

Canada, Dukhobors in, 193, 195, 196, 200, 201.
Castration, 180.
Catharine II., 43, 56.
Cathedral of Resurrection, 122.
Caucasus, 7, 39, 47, 54, 152, 192, 194, 217, 218.
Censorship, the, 52, 119, 205.
Certificates, sacramental, 144.
Chancellor, Richard, 35.
Chlistic sects, 179.
Christian Martyrdom in Russia, by V. Tchertkoff, 200.
Christian, The (Russian), 222.
Church, the true, 198.
Circassia, 193.
Cleanliness of Sectarians, 66.
Commune, French, 110.
Compulsion, conversion by, 166, 174–6.
Conference, Molokan, 41.
Confession, auricular, 179.
Constantine, Grand Duke, 231.
Constantinofka, 68.
Contemporary Review, 16, 54, 170, 213, 233.
Coronation of Tsar, 187, 228.
Corruption of Society, 72.
Cossacks, 30, 113, 162, 199, 208.
Courland, 85.
Credulity of peasantry, 20.
Creeds, 62, 177–184.
Crimea, 152, 163, 227.
Crimean War, 44, 51, 73, 85.
Cupolas, significance of, 16.
Custom House, A Russian, 80.
Cyprus, 200.

Daily Chronicle, 7, 208.
Daily News, 74, 76.
Daughter of Peter the Great, the, by R. N. Bain, 133.
Dawn in Russia, the, by H. W. Nevinson, 208.
Delianoff, Count, 129.
Democracy and Liberty, by W. E. H. Lecky, 133, 146.
Dillon, Dr., 144, 147, 182, 213.
Disappearance of prisoners, 89.
Disputes among the peasantry, 9.
Dissent, non-penal, 20.
Dnieper, the river, 3, 94, 103, 120, 156.
Domestic policy of Russia, 7, 51.
Domestic rights refused, 147, 162, 199.
Domiciliary visits of police, 145.
Don Cossacks, 66.
Don, the river, 47, 94, 120.
Dooshenkovsky, preacher, 182.
Dorpat, 172, 222.
Dostoïeffsky, 149.
Droshkies and droshky-drivers, 95, 158, 222.
Due North, by M. M. Ballou, 48, 131.
Dukhobors, the, 31, 37, 44, 45, 47, 54, 178, 181, 192–203, 226.
Dukhobors, the, by J. Elkinton, 196, 199.
Duma, the, 42, 214, 215, 217, 225.
Dutch colonists in Russia, 56.

Easter gift, the, 212.
Eastjakes, 164.
Echoes of Service, 109, 223.
Economic conditions, 110, 209.
Edward VI., 34.
Ekaterinsky Canal, 121.

Elizabetgrad, 67.
Elizabeth, Queen, 14, 34.
Elizabetpol, 157.
Empress Catharine II., 43, 56.
Empress Elizabeth, 133.
England, 134, 184, 218, 226.
England, Church of, 139.
Erivan, 190.
Esthonia, 173.
Esthonians, 107.
Étapes, 150.
Eucharistic certificates, 144.
"Evangelical Alliance," 95, 221.
"Evangelical Christians," 224, 225.
"Evangelical Continental Society," 225.
"Evangelical Union of Russia," 222.
Excommunication, Tolstoy's, 201.
Exiles, 11, 44, 47, 100, 148, 151, 152–165, 188, 212, 219, 221.
Expansion of Russia, the, by F. H. Skrine, 21, 48, 135.

Factories, 110, 207.
Faith in Christ, necessity of, 181.
Fall of Tsardom, the, by Carl Joubert, 121, 212.
False reports, official, 178.
Fanatics, sectarian, 177.
Fashionable life in St. Petersburg, 72.
Fastings, 179.
Feet-washing, ceremony of, 109.
Fetler, Pastor Wilhelm, 225, 226.
Fetters, 82, 87, 128, 159.
Fines, 146.
Finland, 7, 41, 107, 215, 225.
Floggings, 9, 22, 68, 88, 89, 113, 117, 142, 149, 151, 162, 175, 179.
Foreign faiths, 206.
Forestry, State, 182.
Forests, 37, 57, 79, 88, 217, 219.
Fortnightly Review, 52, 141, 202.
France, 110.
Fraud, conversion by, 166, 172–4.
Fredericks, Baron, 214.
Free Russia, by W. H. Dixon, 48.
Frontier, the Russian, 77.

Gapon, the priest, 134, 207.
Gartner, evangelist, 90.
Georgia, 193, 199.
German atheistic literature, 110.
German colonists, 56, 58, 59, 81, 94, 103, 223.
Germany, 41, 77, 110, 218.
Gerussi, 154, 190, 219.
Ghosts, 19.
Gladstone, W. E., 54, 129.
Gorin, the exile, 191.
Gorky, Maxim, by Dr. Dillon, 194.
Gourko, General, 129.
Graves of Baptists, 102.
Graves of exiles, 153.
Greater Russia, by Wirt Gerrare, 7, 143, 163.
Greek Cross, 29.
Greek Uniates, the, 94, 119.
Gusenko, Anton, exile, 162.

Hamburg, 107.
Herzen, Alexander, 44.
History of the Eastern Church, by A. P. Stanley, 13, 36, 220.
Hoijer, N. F., evangelist, 224.
Holy Kiss, ceremony of, 39.
Holy pictures (see Ikons).
Holy Spirit, indwelling, 179.
Hubeer, Martin, 59.

Ignatieff, Count Alexis, 129, 147, 159.
Ignatieff, General, 129, 135.
Ikons, 13, 25, 26, 60, 62, 63, 111, 122, 144, 167, 175, 179, 180, 208.
Imperialism, English, 6.
Imperialism, French, 110.
Impressions of Russia, by Georg Brandes, 45, 147.
Industrial classes, 111, 207, 213.
Indwelling Christ, the, 179.
In Joyful Russia, by J. A. Logan, 187, 228.
In Memoriam, 7.
Insurrection, 205.

In the Land of the North, by S. H. Wilkinson, 135, 227.
Irreligion of educated classes, 71.
Isdanoff, exile, story of, 156–8.
Ispravniks, 64, 120, 142.
Ivan the Terrible, 35, 36, 138.
Izbas, 61, 63, 65, 69, 112, 160, 167, 180, 199.

Jailers, 27, 116, 117, 175, 234 (see also Police).
Jannsohn, the smith, 91.
Jemosheffka, 102.
Jewish prostitutes, 172.
Jews, 7, 44, 45, 115, 130, 135, 146, 166, 170, 211, 212, 226, 227.
Judges, 52.
Justification by faith, 181.

Kapustinsky, exile, story of, 158–161.
Karakasoff, assassin, 119.
Karamzin, 36.
Kargel, Pastor, 99, 225.
Kars, 54, 192.
Katkoff, M., journalist, 129.
Kazan, 202.
Kelm, Brother, 79.
Kem, 31.
Kennan, George, 11, 165.
Kertch, Straits of, 152.
Kharkov, 66, 101, 224.
Kherson, 15, 45, 58, 59, 66, 67, 68, 104.
Kieff, 3, 10, 12, 66, 67, 124, 129, 147, 156, 158, 159, 174, 175.
Kishineff, 212.
Kiss, the holy, 39.
Knout, the, 30, 36, 38, 54, 137.
Kolokol, 44.
Korff, Count, 74.
Kornei, exile, story of, 155.
Kozloff, Ivanovna, story of, 172.
Kremlin, the, Moscow, 187, 211, 217, 220, 228.
Kropotkin, Prince, 66, 213.
Kurds, 219.
Kursemneeks, Anne, story of, 131.

Lassotsky, Stundist, 59.
Laws of Russia, 141, 146, 172, 202, 205.
Lecky, W. E. H., 146.
Lent, 139.
Lettish Baptists, 107, 108, 225.
Lettish population, 86.
Libau, 85, 107.
Lieven, Princess, 93.
Liquor traffic, 9.
Literature, religious, 54, 226.
Lividia, 67, 132, 152.
Local self-government (see also Mir and Zemstvo), 53.
Lodz, 108, 225, 227.
Long, R. E. C., 195, 203.
Loozanoff, priest, 183.
Lord's Supper, 160, 168, 181 (see also Breaking of Bread).
Loss of civil rights, 157, 176.
Loyalty of dissenters, 98, 112, 123, 191.
Lübeck, Pastor J., 108.
Lutheran Church, 24, 59, 88, 130, 131, 146, 173.
Lutheran pastors, 42, 67, 81, 131.
Luther's Bible, 57.

Magicry, 20.
Makroff, story of exile, 158.
Malevanny, preacher, 182.
Manchuria, 204.
Manifesto (see Ukaze).
Marriage laws, 55, 99, 105, 170.
Marriages of Sectarians, 179.
Materialistic worship, 180.
Maude, Aylmer, 181, 193.
Melania, preacher, 182.
Melitopol, 41.
Memel, 85, 92, 95.
Mennonites, 56, 57, 59, 107, 109, 181, 182, 223, 224.
Methodist Episcopal Church, 225.
Metropolitan of Moscow, 27, 28.
Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, 24.
Michailoff, priest, 161.
Military Recruiting Law, 44.
Military service refused, 109, 182, 193, 198, 199.
Mill-hands, 9, 207.

Ministerial circulars, secret, 143.
Ministry of Public Education, 129.
Ministry of the Interior, 96, 97, 129, 173, 212.
Minshikoff, M., 7.
Mir, the, 8, 9, 53, 60, 64.
Missions, Orthodox, 16, 161, 169, 183.
Mohammedans, 5, 166, 192.
Molokans, 34–42, 123, 140, 146, 178, 181, 191, 202, 224, 226.
Moravians, 57, 59, 88.
Morosoff, colporteur, story of, 159.
Moscow, 12, 27, 35, 36, 66, 75, 110, 113, 156, 180, 187, 194, 196, 205, 206, 210, 213, 217, 224.
Moscow Gazette, 111, 129.
Moscow, the Story of, by Wirt Gerrare, 31.
Moscow University, 134.
Mosheim's *Church History*, 137.
M.P. for Russia, by W. T. Stead, 6, 20, 129, 135.
Müller, George, 75.
Mysticism, religious, 179.

Nagaikas, 113, 120, 137, 199, 208.
Napoleon, 27, 229.
Narodnaya Volya, 120.
National Assembly proposed, 121.
National Review, 15, 138, 144, 147, 204, 209, 233.
Natszelling, 82.
Nertchinsk, 47.
Neurotic performances, religious, 179, 183.
New Exodus, the, by H. Frederic, 128, 130, 135, 138, 170.
Nicholaieff, 68, 222.
Nicholas, the monk, 138.
Niemetz, Pastor, 95, 97.
Nihilism, 105, 120.
Nijni Novgorod, 231.
Nikon, 28, 29.
Nineteenth Century, the, 6, 213, 214.
Nonconformity, English, 139, 182.
Novgorod, 197.
Novikoff, Madame (see also *M.P. for Russia*), 5, 6, 19, 129, 135.
Novitsky, Professor Odest, 181.
Novoe Vremya, the, 17, 129.

Obi, gulf of, 198.
Odessa, 24, 39, 59, 67, 68, 103, 110, 213, 222, 227.
Old Believers (see Raskolniks).
Oncken, J. G., pastor, 58, 95, 96, 98, 190.
Oncken, W. S., 190.
Orders in the Church, 18.
Orenburg, 219.
Out of Chaos, by Prince Trubetzkoy, 205, 206.

Pale, the, 170, 227.
Parish popes, 12, 16, 22, 23, 38, 40, 60, 62, 64, 92, 101, 104, 111, 137, 144, 166, 168, 170, 173, 174, 178, 183, 231 et seq.
Paschkoff, Colonel, 74, 76.
Passports, 96, 206.
Pastors, recognition of, by the law, 57, 83, 100.
Pavloff, Pastor V., 59, 181.
Peace, International, 204.
Peculiar People, A, by Aylmer Maude, 150, 192, 196.
Pergel, 86.
Peroun, the god of thunder, 4.
Persian frontier, 152, 154, 190.
Peter the Great, 5, 28, 30, 36, 51, 189, 232.
Petitions to Tsar, 130, 206, 208, 221.
Petrovsky Palace, 187.
Physician in prison, 82.
Pilgrims in Russia, 156, 194.
"Pioneer Mission," 225.
Plehve, M. de, 42, 206, 212.
Pobiedonostzeff, K. P., 16, 20, 57, 74, 76, 111, 129, 133, 143, 166, 201, 202, 215, 221, 233.
Poland, 7, 77, 94, 103, 129, 170, 210.
Poles, 5, 107, 115, 116, 119, 146, 172, 210, 217.
Police, activity of, 102, 113.

Police examinations, 63, 101, 131, 150.
Police office, 40, 81, 96, 145, 148.
Police, tyranny of the, 141, 142, 148, 149, 155, 160.
Polish insurrection, 78.
Political propaganda, 104, 112, 113, 118.
Poltava, 5, 66.
Poor, care for the, 183.
Prayer of the Tsar, 128.
Prayers for the Tsar, 123, 228.
Prayers for the dead, 181.
Preachers, 32, 62, 67, 79, 80, 87, 90, 107, 114, 150, 163, 168, 181, 202, 221, 223, 225.
Preachers, women, 64, 65, 182.
Press, the, 205, 206, 226.
Princess, the, 186.
Prisons, 47, 81, 86, 88, 90, 100, 101, 105, 113, 114, 118, 144, 148, 150, 157, 209, 234.
Prison hospital, 82.
Pristav, 145, 154, 160, 161.
Prochanza, Pastor, 225.
Prokhanoff, I. S., 222, 226.
Proselytism, 57, 58, 97, 98, 100, 103, 156, 211, 227.
Prostitutes, Jewish, 172.
Prussians, 82, 87, 116.
Publican, an astute, 9.
Publications, 52.
Puritanism in England, 35, 182.

Radcliffe, Reginald, 75.
Radstock, Lord, 73.
Raskolniks, 28–33, 55, 147, 179, 180, 226, 236.
Ratushny, Stundist, 59, 67, 170.
Real presence, the, 179.
Real Siberia, the, by J. Foster Fraser, 21.
Recollections of the House of the Dead, 150.
Red Russia, by J. Foster Fraser, 15, 170, 207, 211.
Red Terrorism, 120.
Reflections of a Russian Statesman, 137, 139.
Reformation in Russian Church, 16, 28.
Reformation in Western Europe, 57.
Reforms of Alexander II., 52.
Reincarnation, 37.
Religious literature, 52, 226.
Reunion of Greek and Roman Churches, 140.
Review of Reviews, 134, 137, 176, 203.
Revolution, French, 110, 213.
Revolutionary movement, 44, 207, 209, 213.
Rewards for embracing Orthodoxy, 172.
Ride to Khiva, by Col. Burnaby, 9.
Rjaboshapka, Stundist, 59.
Roman Catholic Church, the, 18, 28, 36, 88, 94, 119, 140, 166, 172.
Rostov on Don, 184, 227.
Rousse, the, 129.
Russia, by Sir H. M. Wallace, 17, 56, 231.
Russia and England, by "O.K.," 5, 19.
Russia as it Really is, by Carl Joubert, 128.
Russia in Revolution, by G. H. Perris, 207.
Russian Affairs, by G. Drage, 43, 134.
Russian Art, by A. Maskell, 16.
Russian Characteristics, by E. B. Lanin, 72, 231.
Russian Gazette, the, 165.
Russian History and Literature, by Prince Wolkonsky, 51, 197.
Russian Peasantry, the, by Stepniak, 23, 31, 59, 64, 216.
Russian Pictures, by T. Michell, 31, 55, 57.
Russia, Past and Present, 139.
Russia, Political and Social, by L. Tikhomirof, 71, 129, 143.

Sacrificers, the, 177.
Saints' days, 23.
Saints, worship of, 106, 116, 180.

Samojedes, 164.
Saratov, 39.
Sarepta, 57.
Schimanski, evangelist, 81, 175.
Schools, 171.
Schuscha, 154.
Scoundrels in high offices, 15.
Sebastopol, 103, 109.
Sects, 31, 40, 55, 138, 177.
Self-discipline, 180.
Semenoff, Matthew, 36.
Serfs, emancipation, 53, 122, 189.
Serge, Grand Duke, 129, 210.
Sergieff monastery, 138.
Service of the Mass, the, by Dr. Wright, 16.
Shchedrin, 146.
Shrines, 13.
Shtshee, 142.
Siberia, 11, 20, 36, 38, 39, 44, 47, 54, 133, 148, 150, 151, 191, 194, 217, 218.
Siberia and the Exile System, by George Kennan, 11, 165.
Sievers, Count, 96–98.
Singing, 39, 40, 57, 74, 82, 101, 168, 177.
Sixteen Years in Siberia, by Leo Deutsch, 11, 116.
Six Years in the Russian Court, by M. Eager, 14.
Skopzy, 180.
Skovoroda, G., evangelist, 37.
Skvortsoff, journalist, 182.
Slavs, 6.
"Society of Friends," 45, 95, 182, 226.
Song of the Broad Axe, 152.
Sophia, Empress, 30.
Sorocin in Poland, 78.
Soroczin on the Volga, 101.
Soulema, General, 47.
Spies, 120, 157.
Spookery, 20.
Spurgeon, C. H., 4, 75.
St. Andrew, 62.
St. Basil, 27.
St. Jonah, 24, 62.
St. Nicholas, 62.
St. Petersburg, 12, 13, 45, 71, 73, 74, 89, 95, 96, 99, 103, 107, 110, 129, 131, 134, 158, 166, 195, 205, 206, 212, 216, 219, 222, 225, 226.
S.S. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 122, 131.
Stanislofsky, 169.
Stanley, Dean, 13, 36.
Starosta, the, 9, 10.
Statistics, perils of, 42.
Statues and images, 14.
Stead, W. T., 6, 17, 20, 74, 129, 134, 182.
Steppes, 37, 56, 57, 69, 102, 217.
Stolypin, M., Premier, 191.
Story of My Life, by Gapon, priest, 207.
Stoyanow, A., letter of, 163–4.
Strand Magazine, 135, 207.
Strikes, 205.
"Student Christian Movement," 226.
Students (see Universities).
Studies in Russia, by A. J. C. Hare, 14, 36, 142.
Stundists, 10, 32, 58, 112, 123, 143, 146–150, 153, 163, 176, 178, 181, 182, 188, 190, 221.
Sunday schools, 107, 224, 225.
Superstitions, 19, 24, 62.
Sutayeff, the peasant, 197.
Suvorin, M., journalist, 129.
Suzdal monastery-prison, 233.
Sweden, 41, 108, 218, 224.
Symbolism, 16.
Synod, the Most Holy, 5, 7, 16, 76, 92, 111, 129, 134, 136, 147, 148, 166, 172, 201, 218, 220, 232.

Tambov, 38, 119, 233.
Tartars, 147, 154.
Taurida, 39, 41, 101.
Taxes, Imperial, 9, 22, 171, 206.
Tchinovniks, 96, 104, 113, 141, 142, 147, 148, 170, 205.
Temptation, conversion by, 166, 169–172.

Thedoseysutsi, sect of the, 172.
Through Russia on a Mustang, by T. Stevens, 19, 142.
Tiflis, 17, 157, 159, 193, 198.
Times, The, 200.
Tolstoy, Count Dmitry, 129, 138, 192.
Tolstoy, Count Leo, 138, 139, 192–203, 229.
Tolstoy, Countess, 201.
Torture, 36, 177 (see Floggings).
Trial by jury, 52.
Trubetzkoy, Prince Serge, 206.
Truth about Russia, the, by W. T. Stead, 17, 74, 139.
Tsar Alexander I., 41, 43, 45, 48, 120.
Tsar Alexander II., 43, 44, 51, 89, 95, 103, 189, 192.
Tsar Alexander III., 43, 127, 129, 192, 207.
Tsar Alexis, 28.
Tsar Ivan the Terrible, 35, 36, 138.
Tsar Nicholas I., 39, 43, 44, 47, 48, 123.
Tsar Nicholas II., 20, 43, 103, 134, 163, 185 et seq.
Tsar Paul, 43.
Tsar Peter the Great, 5, 28, 30, 36, 51, 189, 232.
Tsarevitch, 151.
Tsarina, the, 13, 189, 190, 228.
Tsarlets, 141.
Tsvetkoff, story of the pope, 233.
Tula, 195.
Turkey, 51, 54, 159.
Turnchansk, 163, 164.
Tveritinof of Moscow, 36.

Ukaze of Tsar, 164, 176, 204, 205, 206, 211, 212, 214.
Uklein, the Dukhobor, 38.
Ukraine, the, 218.
Underground Russia, by Stepniak, 71.
Uniates, the Greek, 172.
"Union of the Russian People," 211, 212, 227.
United States of America, 41, 95, 109, 184, 187, 198, 200, 218.
Unity, Christian, 109, 203.
Universities, 111, 192, 201, 206.

Verestchagin, Vassili, 176.
Verigin, Peter, Dukhobor, 193, 198.
Victims, human, for sacrifice, 177.
Vladikawkas, 157, 159.
Vladimir, Grand Duke, 129, 209.
Vladimir the Great, 3, 17, 103, 189.
Vodka, 9, 21, 23, 38, 62, 169.
Volga, the river, 57, 120, 202, 217.

War, Crimean, 44, 51, 73, 85.
War, Russo-Japanese, 15, 204.
War, Russo-Turkish, 159, 192.
Warsaw, 78, 227.
Wealth of Russian Church, 12.
Weist, evangelist, 79.
Wheel, broken on the, 36.
"Whips," 179 (see Floggings).
White Sea, 14, 31, 34, 148, 152, 194.
Windau, 87, 90.
Winter Palace, St. Petersburg, 13, 44, 73, 121, 138, 188, 207, 208.
With Russian Pilgrims, by A. A. Boddy, 14, 23, 24.
Witte, M. de, ex-Premier, 214, 217.
Women preachers, 64, 65, 182.
Women victims, 151, 153, 162, 173, 174, 175, 190, 223.
World, end of the, 183.
Worms, island of, 173.
Worship, liberty of, 99.

Yabloni mountains, 230.
Yakuts, 164.
"Yasnaya Poliana," 195, 198.
Yellow ticket of prostitutes, 172.
Yenesi, gulf of, 163, 164, 191.

Zacharoff, Z. F., 42.
Zemstvo, the, 53, 206.
Ziehl, Pastor, 124.

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